The Art of

DreamWorks

MEGAMIND™

BAD. BRILLIANT. BLUE.

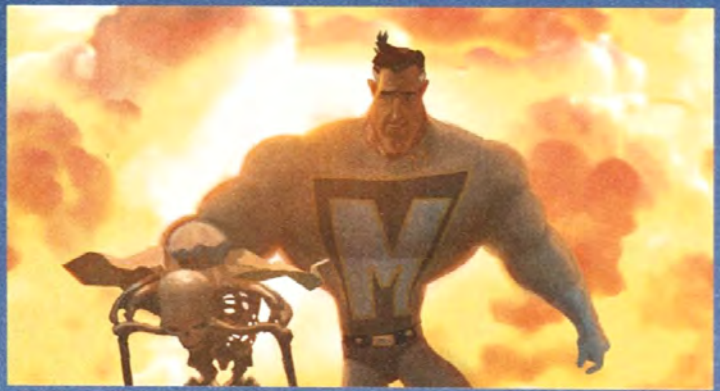
Foreword by Will Ferrell

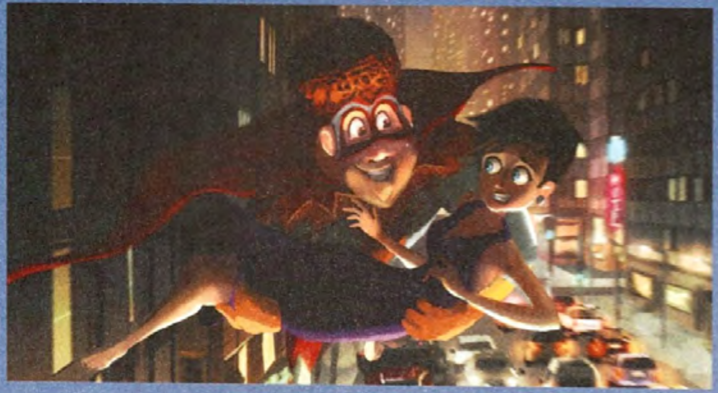
Written by Richard von Busack

$39.95

The Art of DreamWorks MEGAMIND

BAD. BRILLIANT. BLUE.





IN ITS OWN INTERPRETATION of the superhero comic book genre, *Megamind* takes the familiar characters found on the paneled page—the brainy villain with an oversized head, the independent female reporter who never lacks a snappy comeback, the hero with great hair and a V-shaped torso—and puts them in a radically new configuration in which the villain turns out to be a good guy.

On screen, Megamind's journey is one of moral maturation, but just as inspiring is the film's visual evolution during the development process. Inside *The Art of Megamind* you'll find how the talented crew at DreamWorks Animation combined Silver Age comics with heavy metal aesthetics, dramatic spaces like those found in high-concept spy films with visions of blighted urban outskirts, and real-world technology with classic car designs to create one of the most inventive movie experiences this side of Metro City.

Cover art: Ruben Perez
Top: Bryan Lashelle
Above: Goro Fujita

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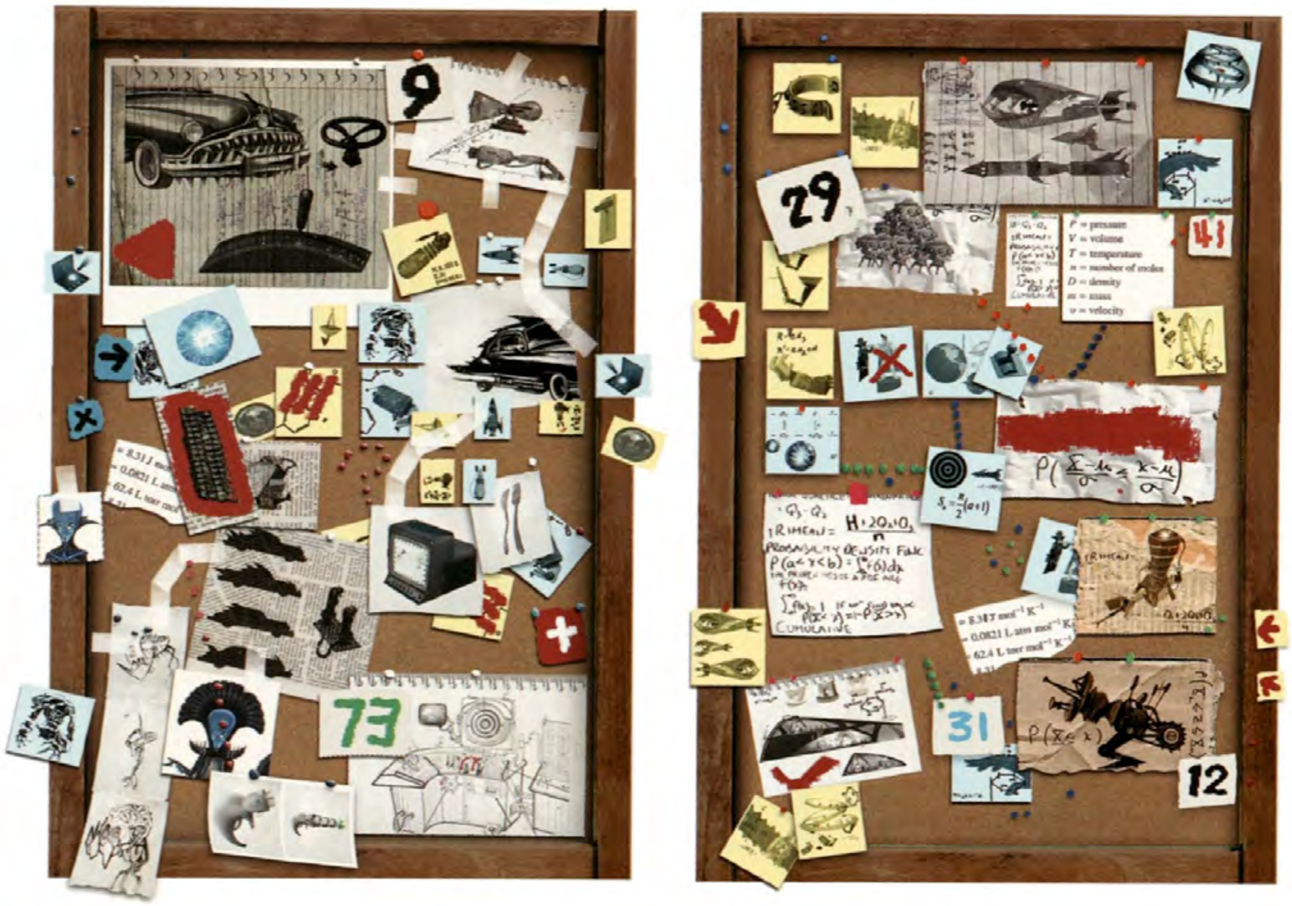
INSIGHT EDITIONS
San Rafael, California



(case) FREEWAY ACTION ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(page 1)* METRO CITY APPROACH ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(pages 2 & 3)* MEGAMIND RETURNS TO HIS LAIR ◦ Alex Puvilland; *(above)* IDEA WALL CORK BOARDS ◦ Chin Ko; *(right)* MEGAMIND ALL DOLLED UP ◦ Bryan Lashelle; *(overleaf)* MEGAMIND CRASHES THROUGH BUILDINGS ◦ Erwin Madrid

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available.

ISBN: 978-1-60887-004-2

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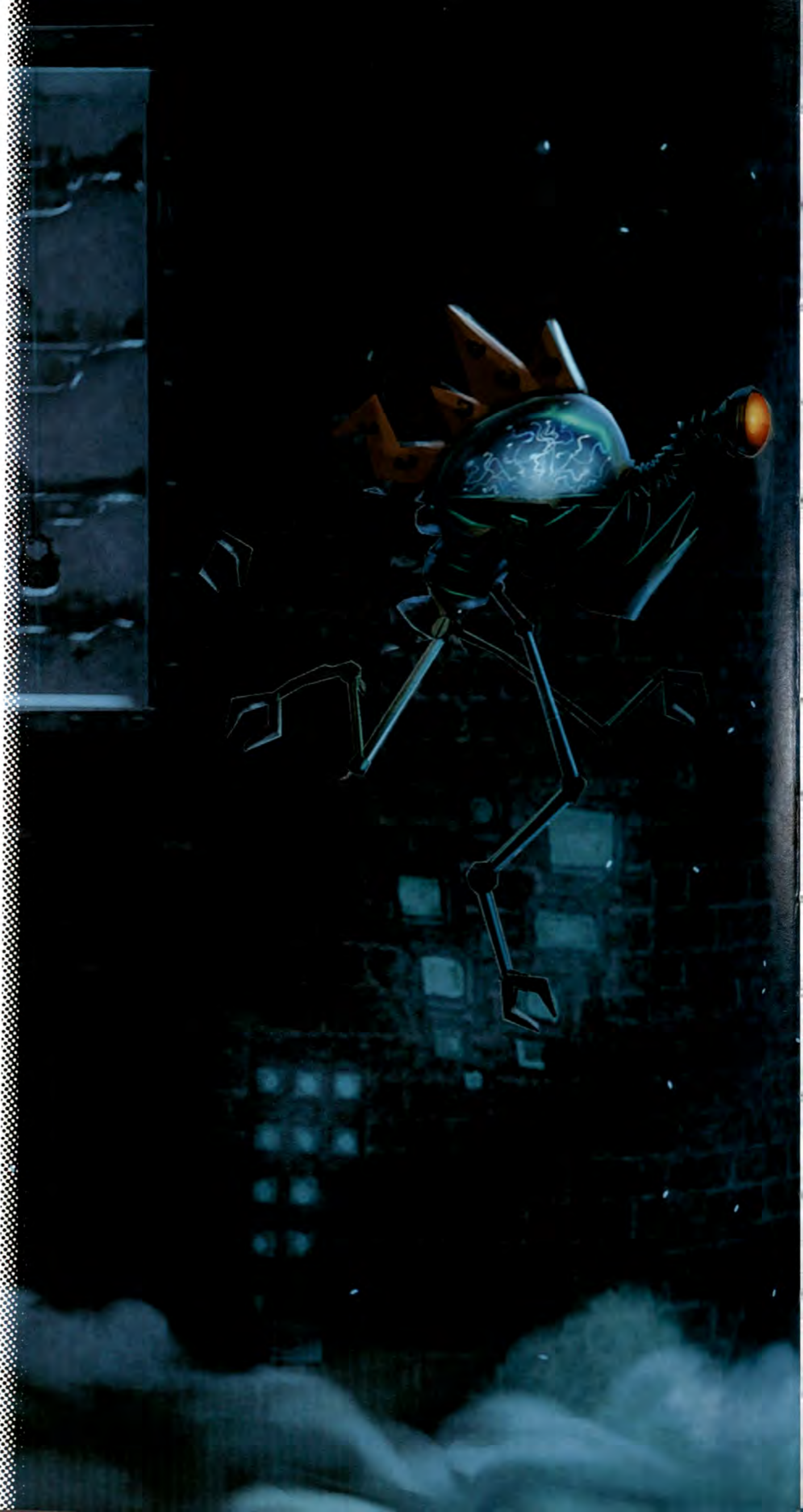

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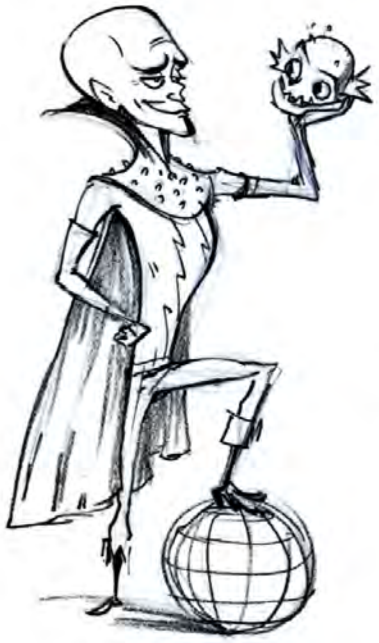


FOREWORD BY WILL FERRELL

I had some preparation for voicing the evil genius Megamind. To begin with, I played Jacobim Mugatu in *Zoolander*. The gorgeously attired Mugatu's misdeeds included heading an organization that, once upon a time, killed Abraham Lincoln. That takes care of the evil part. And, my number seventeen ranking on *Entertainment Weekly*'s "Smartest People in Hollywood" list provides incontrovertible genius credentials. (Not to mention I played Abraham Lincoln once. With a limp.)

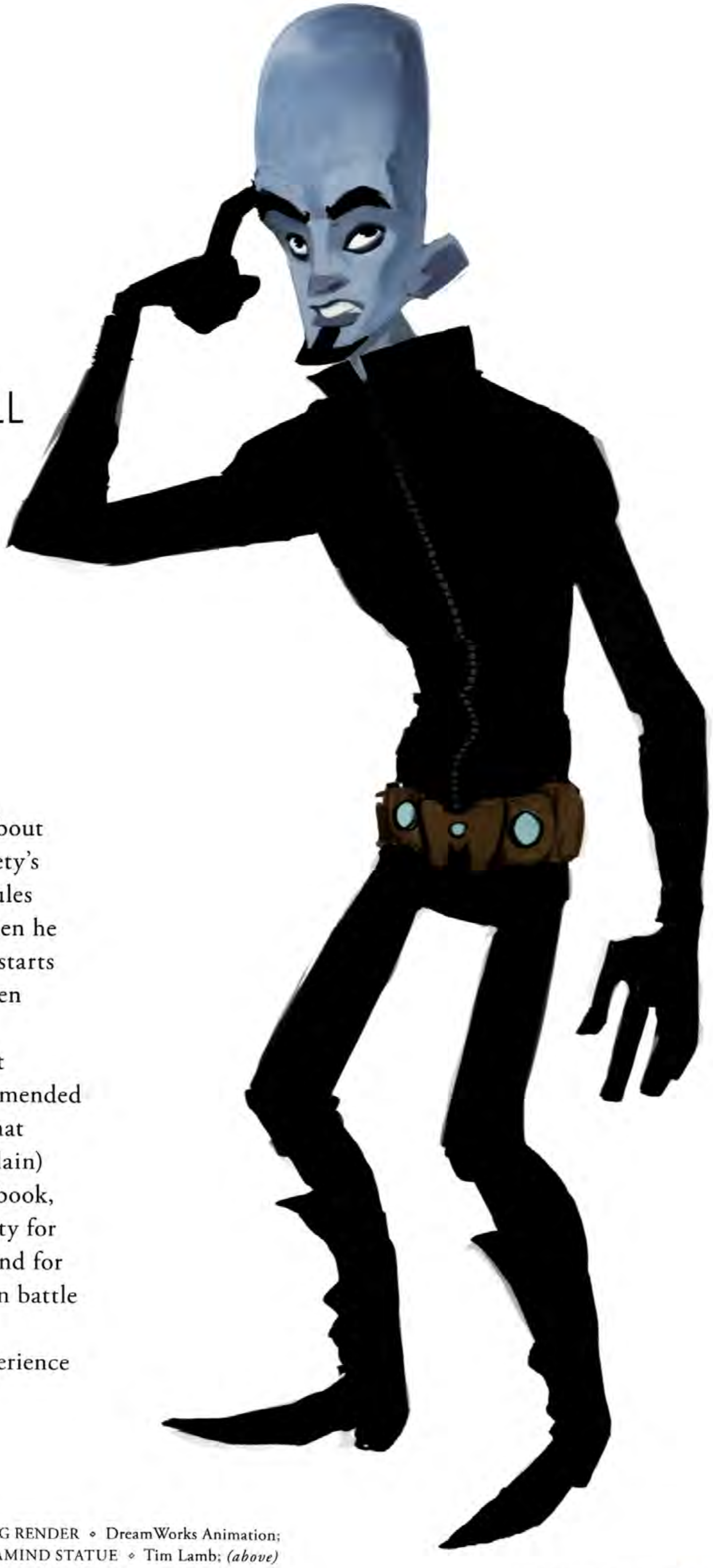
But Megamind is a different kind of role than the usual screen villain. A fashion plate, a rock star in his own mind, Megamind is more showman than deadly menace. After a lifetime of failures, this big, blue-headed extraterrestrial orphan is confounded by success despite his self-proclaimed massive brain power. He's a supervillain who polishes off his archenemy and ends up running a city. Having won everything, he's set back (or, rather, set in the right direction) by a combination of two things: love for a woman, and love of the game.

Since I grew up in the suburbs, it was relatively easy to identify with a solitary figure trapped in a strange world. And the lure of the laser satellite, the dehydrator ray gun, and the giant robot was also appealing. We've all wanted these or similar tools of destruction at one point or another, having spent time stuck in a classroom or walled in by traffic.

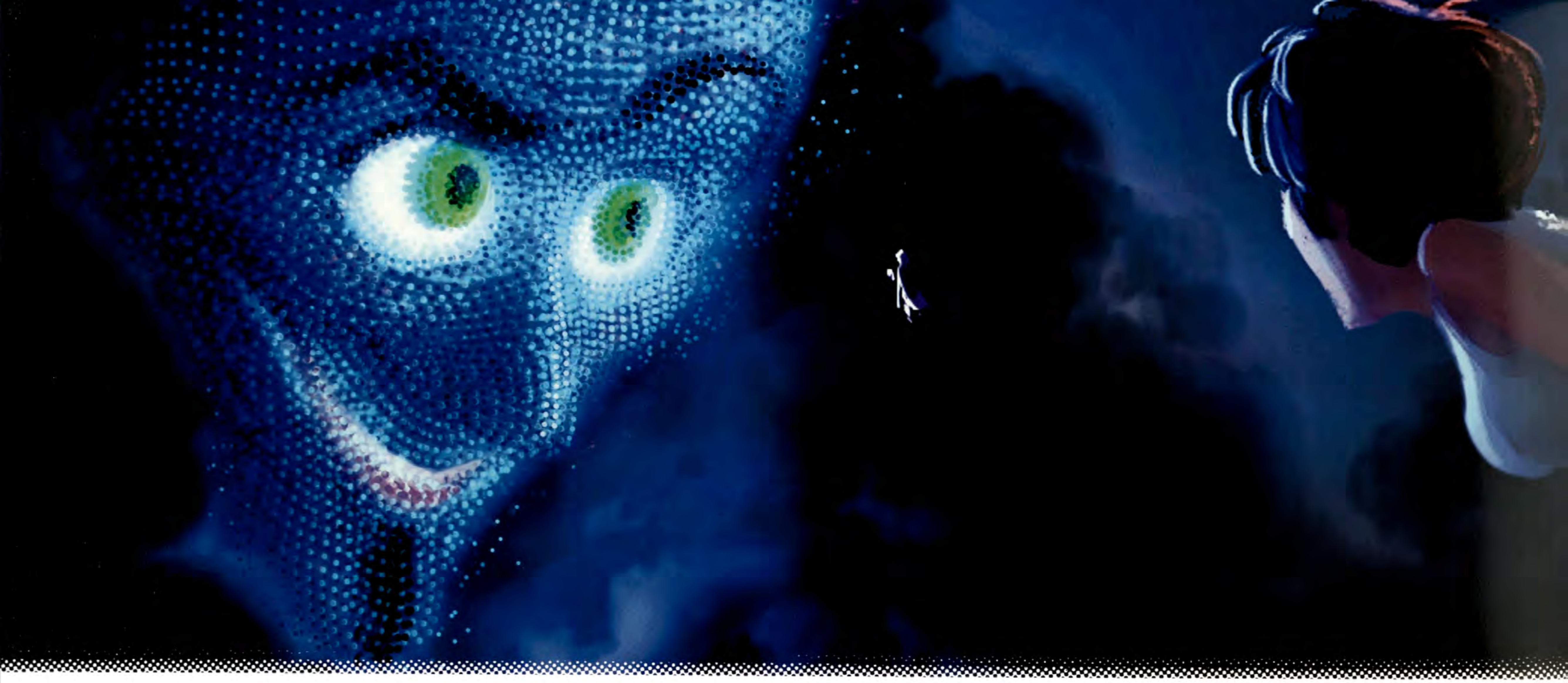
At its core, the supervillain role is about achieving temporary freedom from society's rules. When Megamind decides those rules might have an upside, though, that's when he stops being a stereotypical bad guy and starts behaving like a real man. And that's when things get interesting.

The talented group of filmmakers at DreamWorks Animation should be commended for their understanding of the themes that run deep in the superhero (and supervillain) genre. As you'll see in the pages of this book, they should also be given a key to the city for creating an amazing cast of characters and for developing an entire city where good can battle evil—all from their own imaginations!

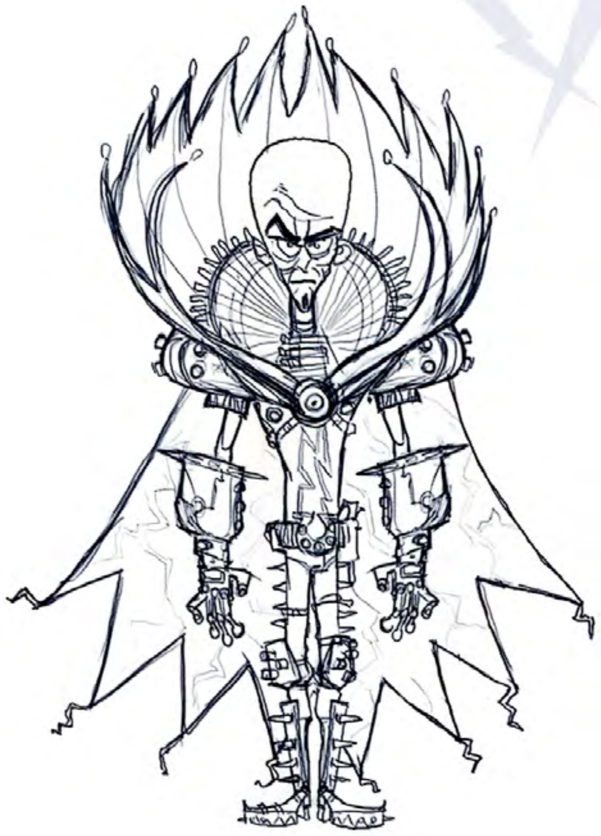
I hope you enjoy the *Megamind* experience as much as I have.



(opposite) CG RENDER ◦ DreamWorks Animation; *(left)* MEGAMIND STATUE ◦ Tim Lamb; *(above)* MEGAMIND ◦ Kory Heinzen



INTRODUCTION THE VILLAIN'S TALE

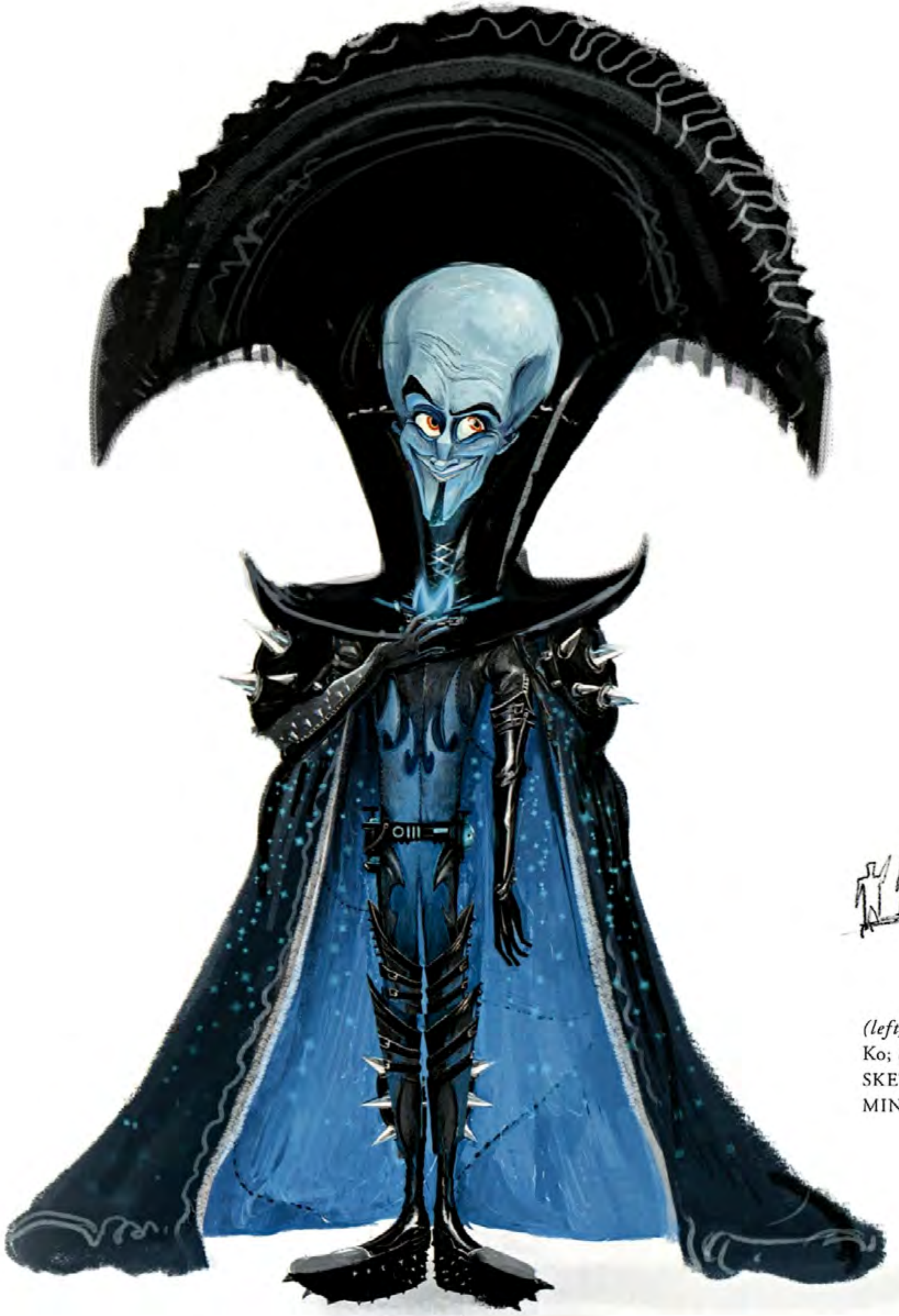


A story is only as good as its villain.

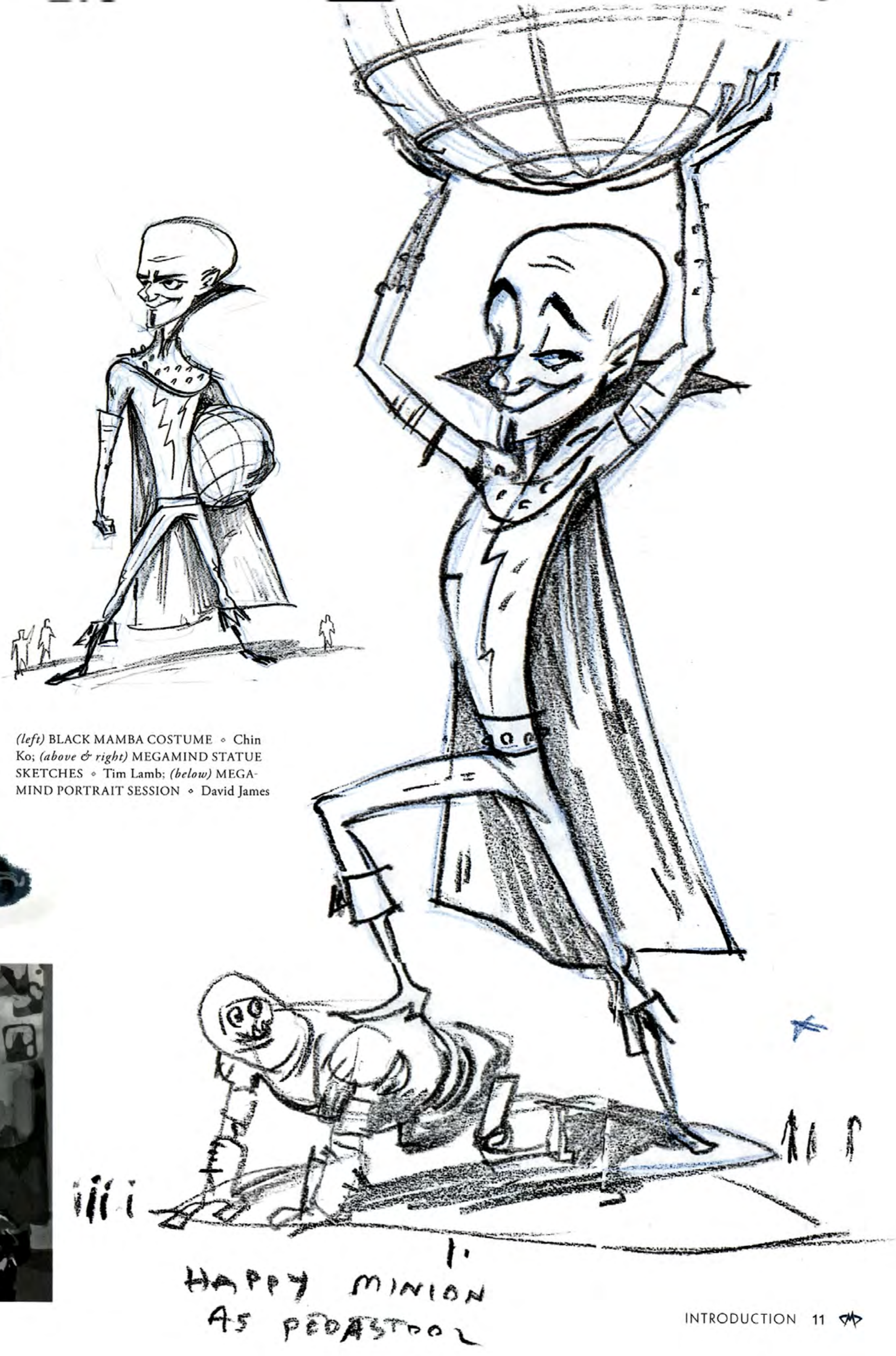
The DreamWorks Animation film *Megamind* takes this adage to heart, seeking to make the case for one particular supervillain, Megamind. But this is not a typical story of good vs. bad. Rather, it's a fresh take on the superhero genre in which the villain ends up as the hero when the power he ultimately obtains is the power to make the right choice.

Directed by Tom McGrath (director of the two *Madagascar* films), *Megamind* is based on an idea brought to DreamWorks Animation by Ben Stiller and Red Hour Films. Developed by the studio into a story of high-flying superhero action, it became a tale of redemption, romance, and reinvention. From the studio that redefined the happily-ever-after world of fairy tales in the *Shrek* series and reinvented the 1950s science fiction film in *Monsters vs. Aliens*, *Megamind* promises a fun reimagining of the ever-popular lore of superhero and supervillain.

(above) BRAINBOT HEAD ◦ Ruben Perez;
(left) BATTLE SUIT SKETCH ◦ Bryan Lashelle



(left) BLACK MAMBA COSTUME ◦ Chin Ko; *(above & right)* MEGAMIND STATUE SKETCHES ◦ Tim Lamb; *(below)* MEGAMIND PORTRAIT SESSION ◦ David James


HAPPY MINION
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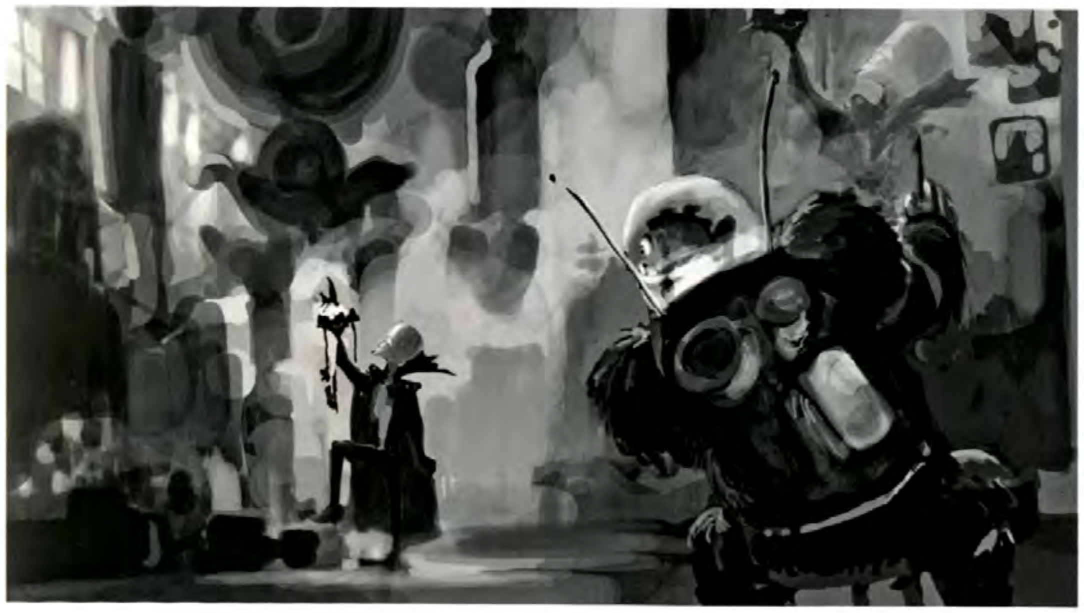
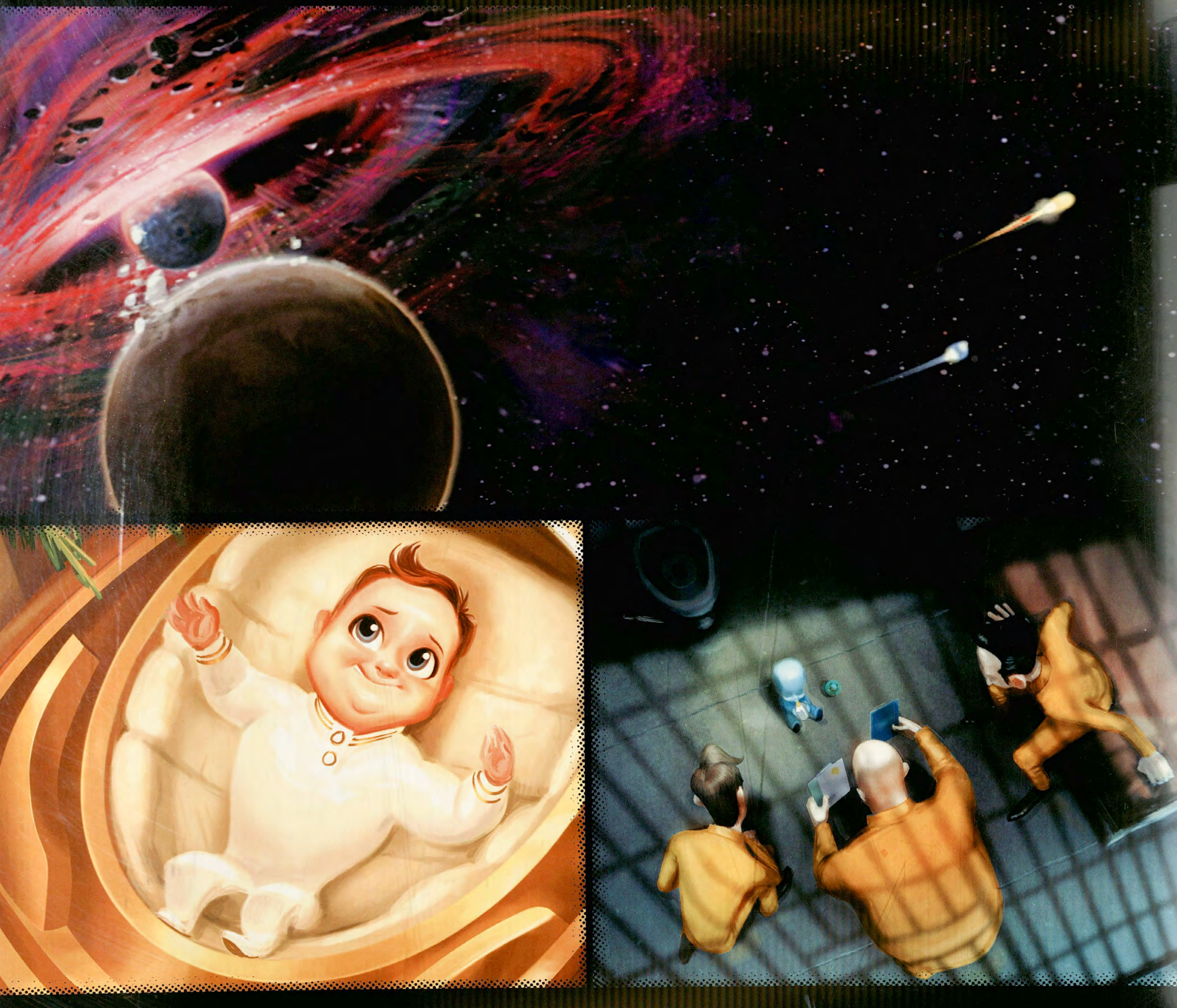
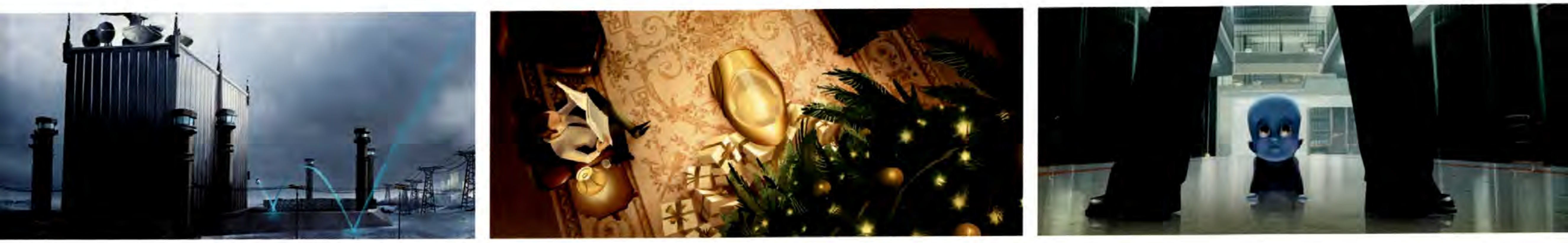






Adapted from a script written by Alan Schoolcraft and Brent Simons, and animated by a talented team working out of the DreamWorks Animation studios in Redwood City and Glendale, California, the film presents a rare challenge: to marry mayhem on a grand scale with an unusual hero's journey on a smaller, very human scale.

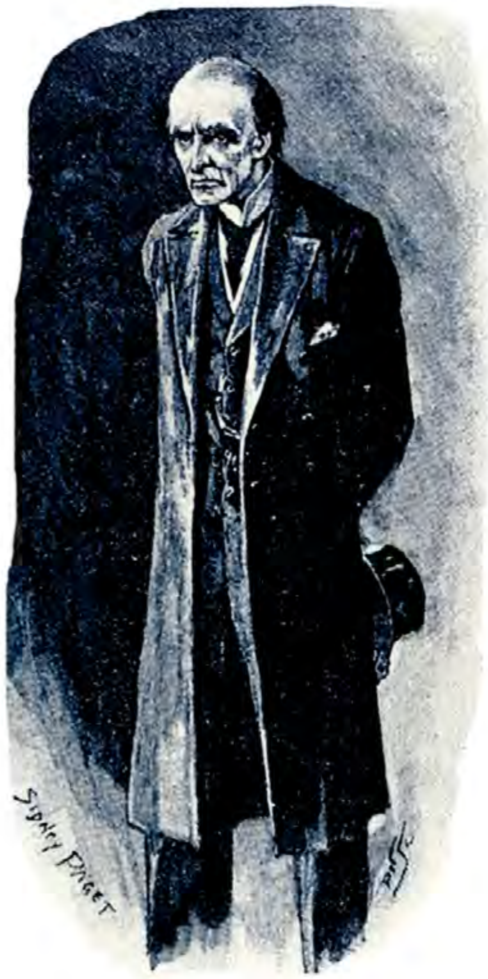
When two planets in a faraway galaxy are drawn into a black hole, parents on both worlds independently send their babies off in rockets to Earth. One lands at a wealthy manor; the other crashes into a jail yard. The more privileged of the two becomes the much admired Metro Man (voiced by Brad Pitt), the soaring hero of Metro City. The other becomes the infamous Megamind, a blue-skinned schemer with an oversized head (voiced by Will Ferrell). Standing between them is Metro City's most famous TV reporter, Roxanne Ritchi, a modern-day version of the archetypical wisecracking female journalist (voiced by Tina Fey).

The game they play—Megamind executes kidnapping plots and launches world-threatening devices, and Metro Man foils him by conducting daring rescues and defusing the deadly machines—has dragged on for years. But when, for a change, one of Megamind's fiendish death traps for Metro Man actually works, the supervillain is surprised to find himself left bereaved. Lonely and without a purpose, he decides to genetically engineer a new superhero to challenge. Suddenly, and significantly, the story's perspective changes rather dramatically. Instead of following a typical superhero storyline, *Megamind* becomes the brainy supervillain's tale, which turns out to be a new look at the concept of good vs. evil, and an affecting character study.

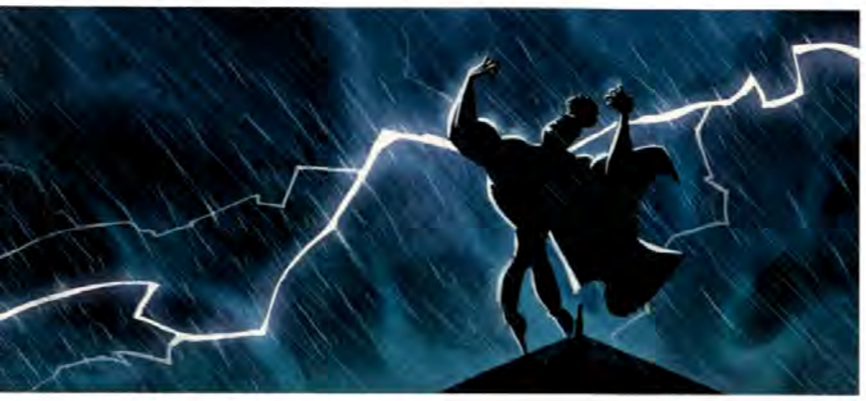
"Under the maniacal laughter, villainous theatrics, and fancy gizmos, Megamind is an endearingly naive and vulnerable character," says head of story Catherine Rader. "He just wants to restore the balance of good and evil, as well as his sense of purpose in life."

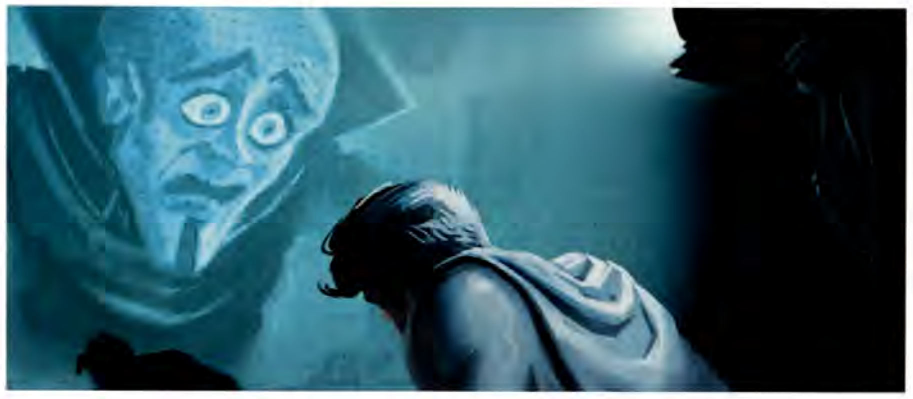
We've seen these rivalries between hero and villain before: Sherlock Holmes, for instance, had his Professor Moriarty (*see right*). Their story, like the competition between Megamind and Metro Man, is one of mutual respect and intellectual one-upmanship that could quickly yield to sudden-death seriousness. Captain Marvel, too, had his Dr. Sivana: a scientist rejected by the world, "his once magnificent mind warped with dreadful schemes for revenge," we're told. And Superman had his Lex Luthor—like Megamind a great intellect, bald as a cue ball, and seemingly doomed to be outwitted every time. (But take Luthor's side for a moment: There's this guy called Superman, an alien with God-like powers. He claims to be on the side of goodness and truth. But isn't that what all the interstellar visitors say?)

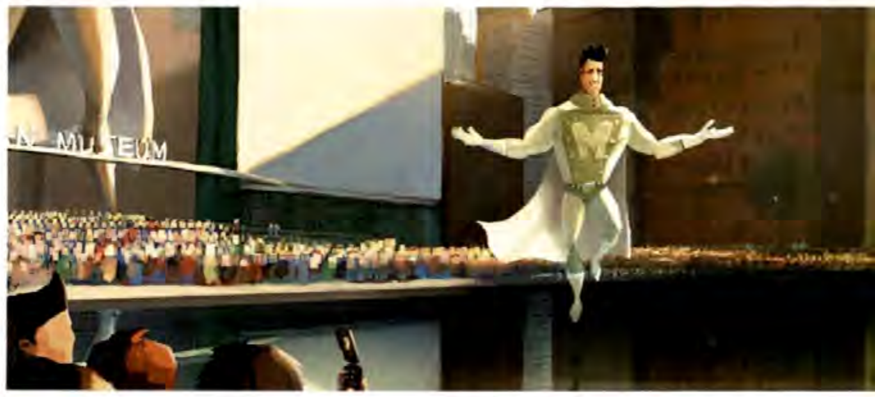
Tights gave way to tuxedos in the James Bond era of the 1960s, but the profile of the supervillain



(opposite, top) BLACK HOLE ◦ Travis Koller; *(opposite, bottom left)* METRO BABY PRESENT ◦ Ruben Perez; *(opposite, bottom right)* FLASH CARD LESSON ◦ Bryan Lashelle; *(top panel, left to right)* PRISON EXTERIOR ◦ Kory Heinzen; METRO POD UNDER TREE ◦ Ruben Perez; MEGA BABY IN PRISON ◦ Travis Koller; *(above)* Sidney Paget's drawing of Professor Moriarty, Sherlock Holmes's nemesis, which appeared in the December 1893 issue of *The Strand Magazine*







(top panel, left to right) TIGHTEN ANGRY IN THE RAIN ◦ Bryan Lashelle; METRO MAN'S WEAKNESS ◦ Ruben Perez; METRO MAN OVER POOL ◦ Goro Fujita; *(above)* Ernst Stavro Blofeld (Telly Savalas) in the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1967); *(opposite, top left)* ROXANNE & BERNARD ON ESCALATOR ◦ Ruben Perez; *(opposite, top right)* MEGAMIND & MINION WALKING DOWN HALLWAY ◦ Goro Fujita; *(opposite, bottom)* THE SPIDER IS NEW ◦ Goro Fujita

was still recognizable: the road through Bond territory leads to Megamind. *From Russia with Love* (1963), for example, conjured an absurd but dastardly mastermind, giving us one of the most memorable and oft-satirized villains in cinema: Blofeld, the bald, cat-fondling villain who, like Megamind, sometimes launched a death satellite or two into the skies (*see left*).

The appeal of a superhero story needs little explanation: children, of both the inner and outer variety, cheer the flying heroes and hiss the snickering madmen. *Megamind* producer Denise Nolan Cascino underscores how the film plays with this eternal appeal of superhero lore: "It's the fantasy that anything is possible. What would life be like with superpowers?"

But it's the story underneath the superpowered war between good and evil that really interests Cascino. "I've tasked myself with being that outside voice," Cascino says. "There are those who know the comic book superhero genre and hold it very dearly. I like to think I'm that other voice that helps make sure the film has broader appeal."

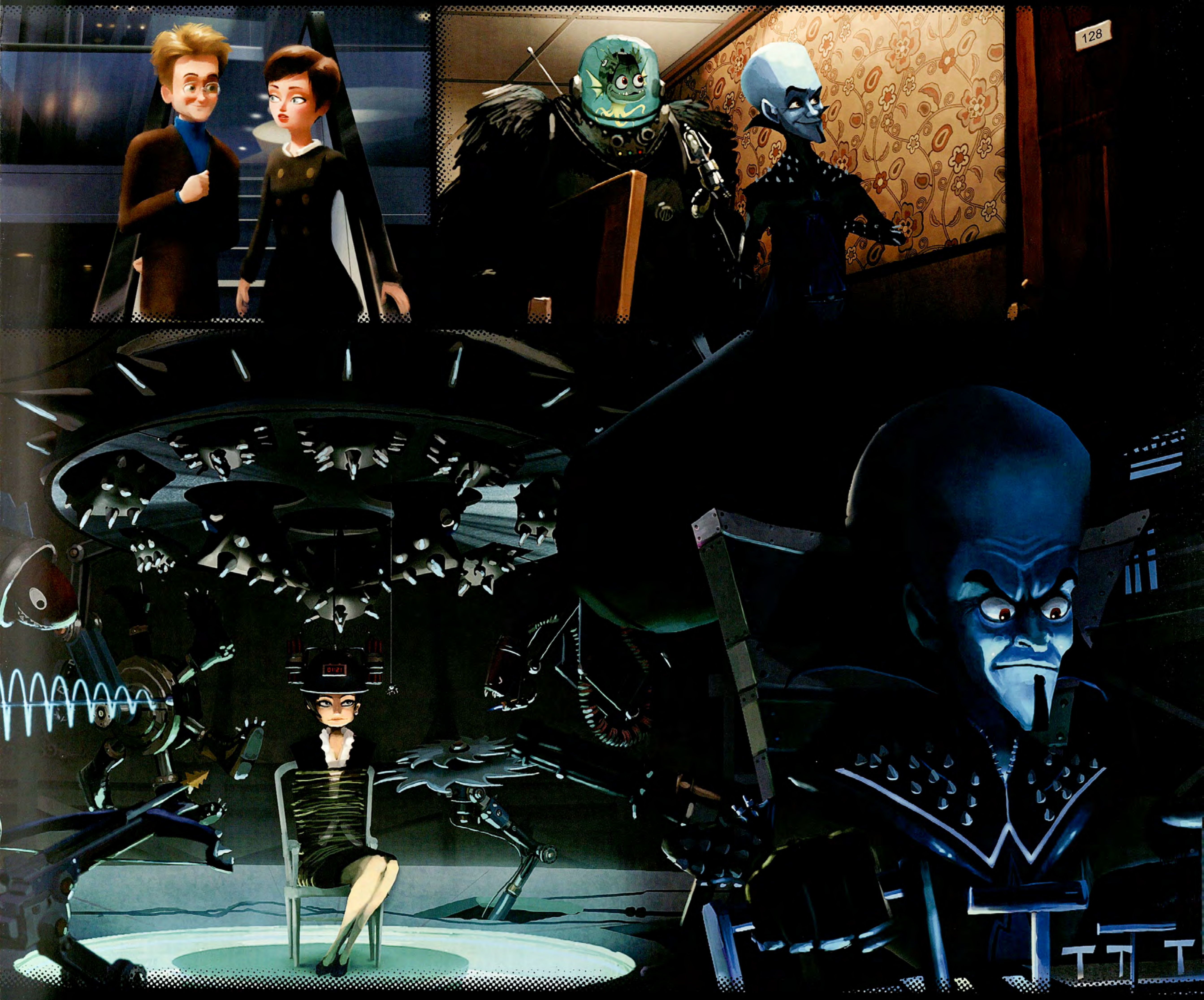
In director Tom McGrath, Cascino found a kindred spirit. "What Tom has brought to the film is a tone that's made the film much more fun," Cascino insists. "The characters are endearing and charming, and you just root for the bad guy, because he's trying so hard for all the wrong reasons."

McGrath emphasizes in return that the essence of *Megamind* isn't complex technology or awe-inspiring effects, but rather a gripping story. "You can have as much whiz-bang as you want, but if you're not following the character, no one is invested in it," he says.

And these characters, despite their roots in shorthand archetypes, have depth. The roguish charm of the villain, for example, is what drew producer Lara Breay to *Megamind*. "Megamind is a lovable egomaniac," she says. "He's really fascinating. He embodies the contradiction between outward appearance and what is truly in the soul. He's *outwardly* a villain; that's why he's cast in the role. But what's in his heart is different. What drew us to him is that he embodies some really admirable qualities, even at his worst.

"The casting of Will Ferrell helps us so much," Breay adds. "He has this incredible ability to play egomaniacs who are not only redeemable but also lovable and hilarious. You can see the essential decency and childlike vulnerability lost in the monster."

Our blue-skinned villain is our new century's version of that richly articulate, insidiously chuckling figure we've all loved for so long. And, like Shakespeare's Richard III, Megamind loves an audience. We in turn embrace a hero challenged, and enjoy having our less socially acceptable side expressed through a really lovely villain speech.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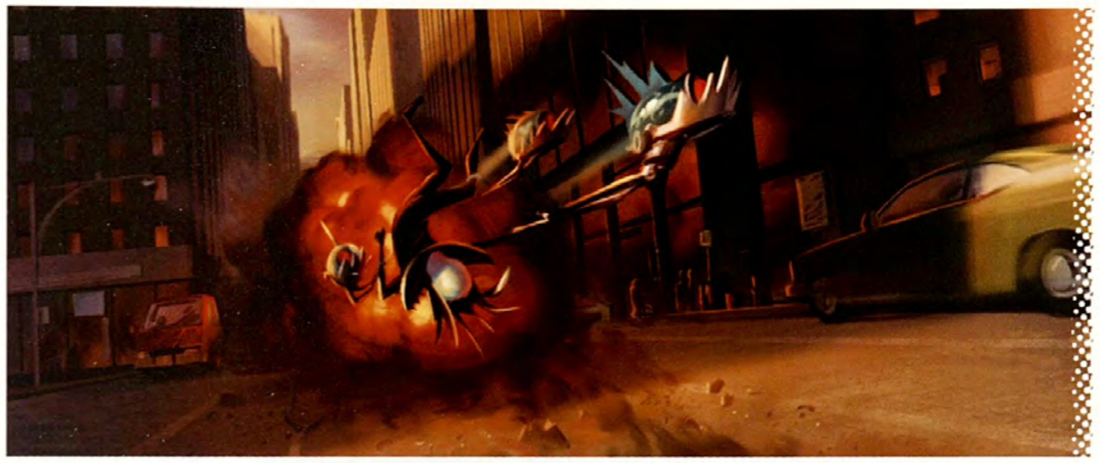
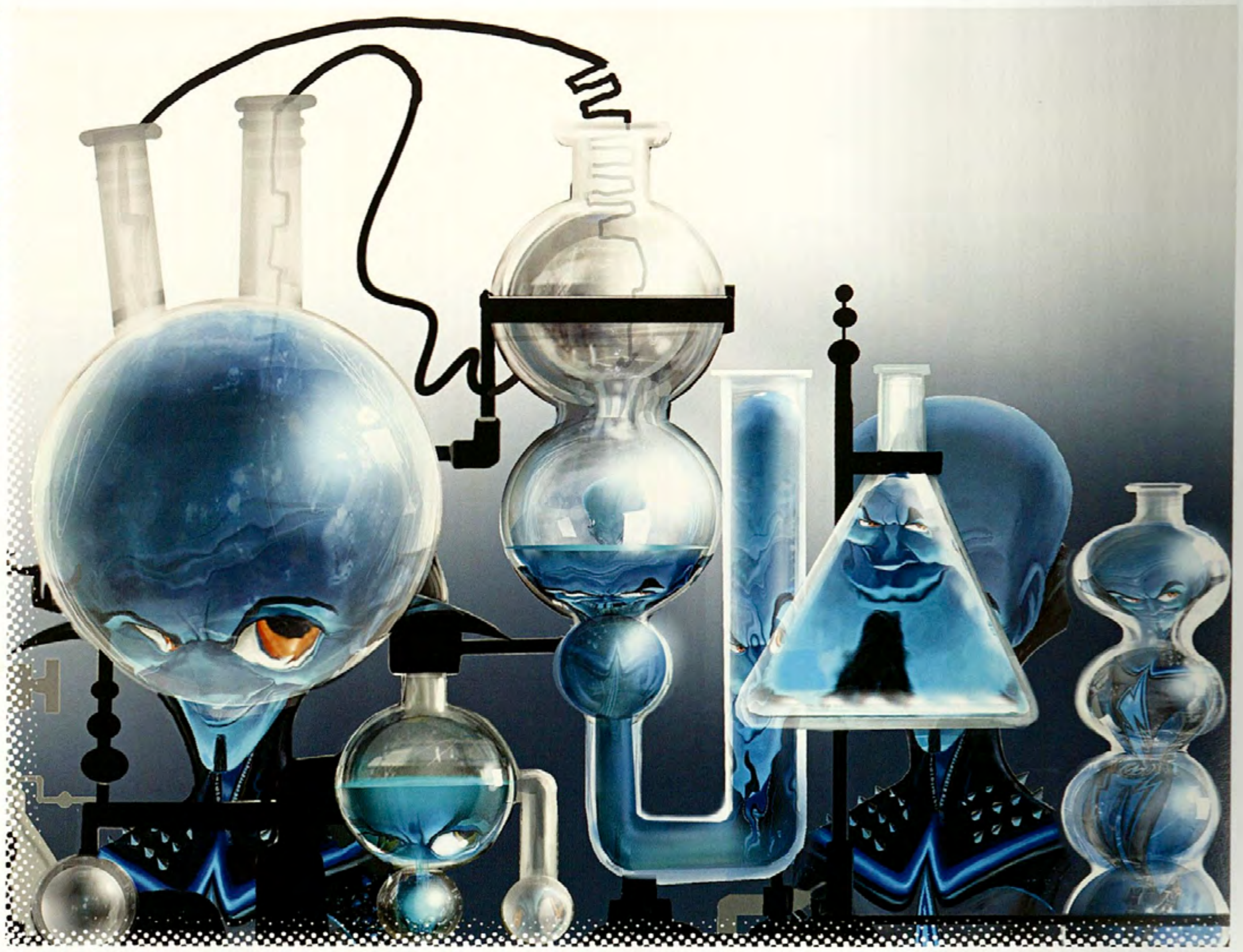
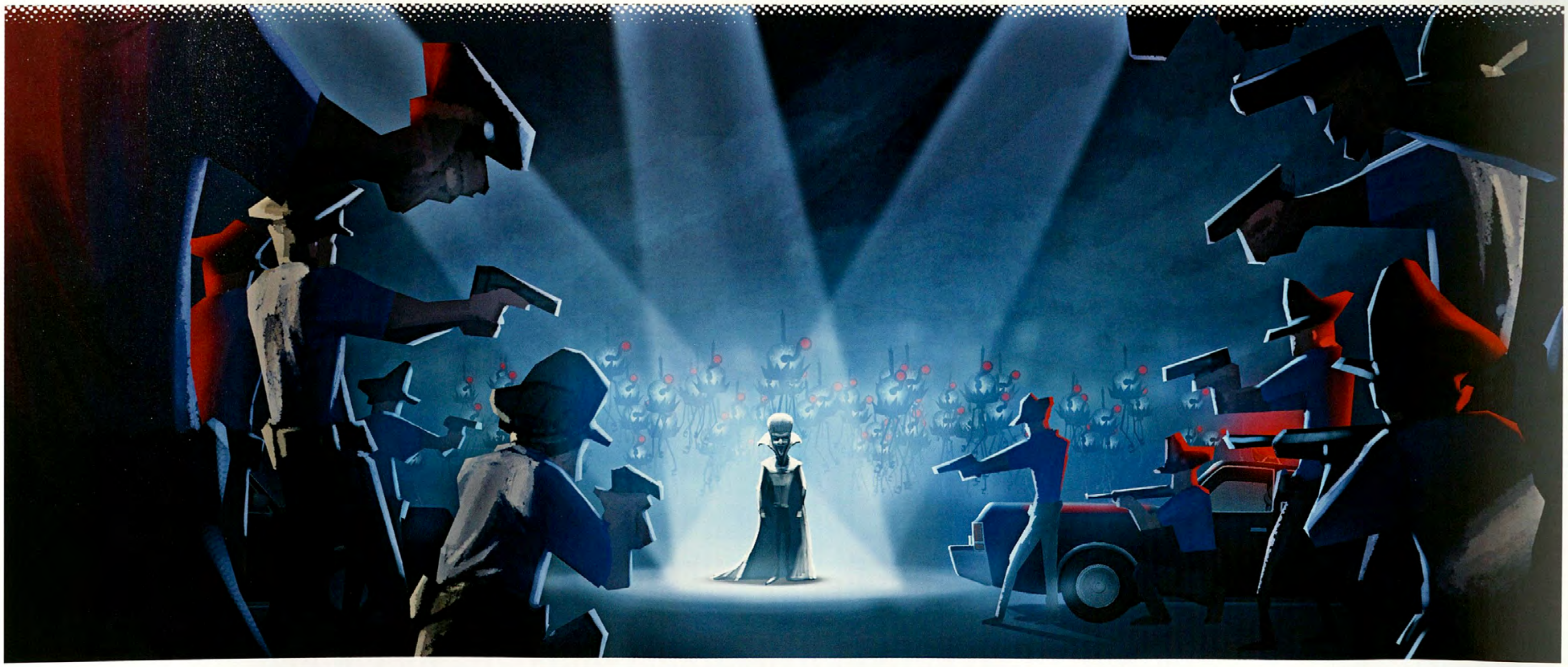
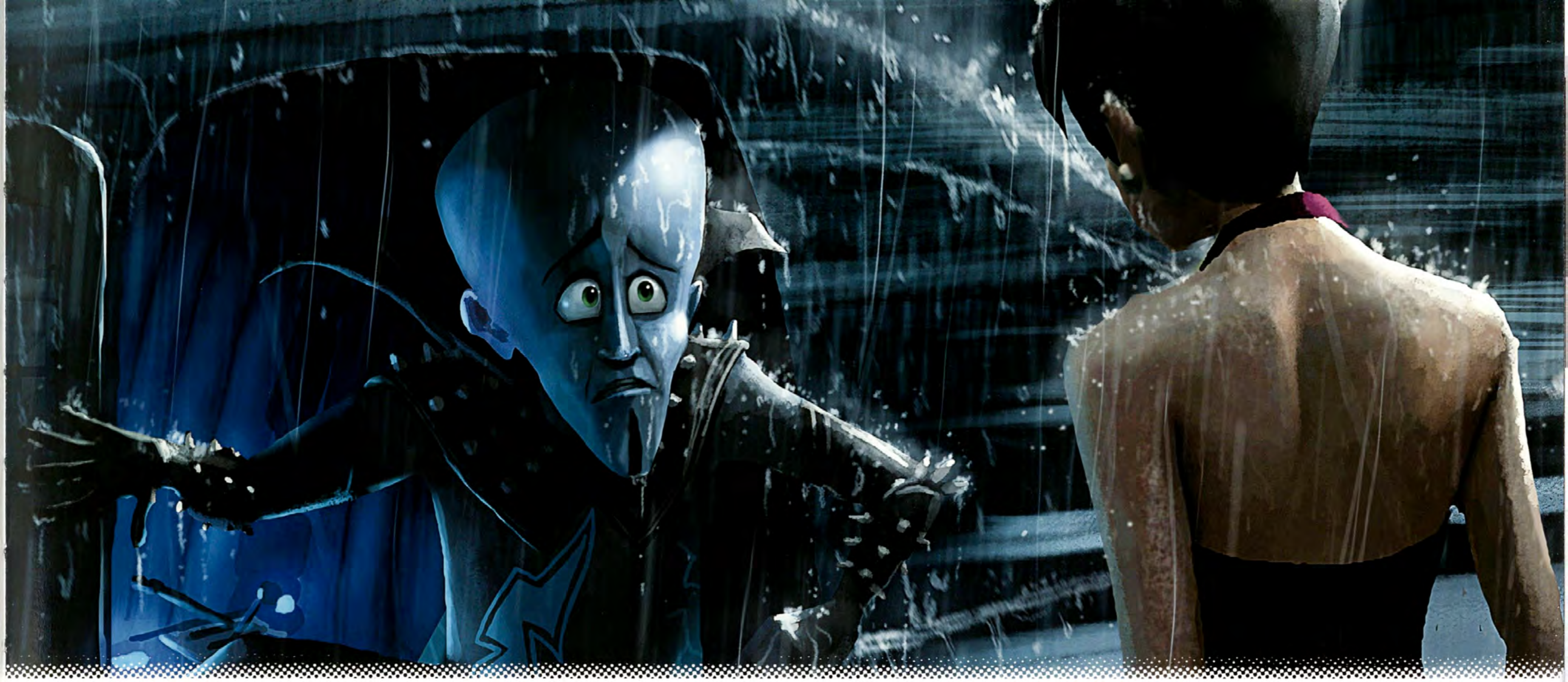


(above) MEGAMIND OUTSIDE TUNNEL ◦ Ruben Perez; *(right)* LABORATORY DISTORTION ◦ Chin Ko; *(bottom)* SPOTLIGHT ON MEGAMIND ◦ Erwin Madrid

> "We understand that his heart is in the right place, that he may play the villain because he feels he's cast in that role. This is a redemption tale like any other, but I think what is different here is that we haven't seen a super-villain take this journey before."
> — LARA BREAY, PRODUCER





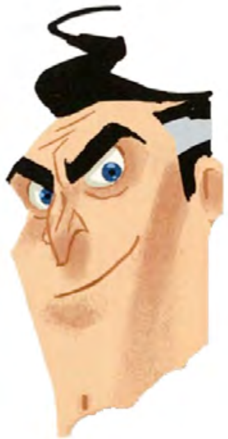


A villain often wants the same thing a hero wants, but he goes about it the wrong way. What's significantly different in the case of Megamind, ultimately, is the story's perspective. Here, we have the villain striving toward, and figuring out, the right way to go—for once.

The artwork you're about to see spans many visions for the film *Megamind*, showing much of the road to realization, as well as the way things might have been. As with any DreamWorks Animation feature film, *Megamind* developed over a series of years. It evolved from script and storyboards, through visual development, to modeling and animation. All this work, examined in depth in this book, took place before any final animation began, eventually leading to the finished 3D version of the film.

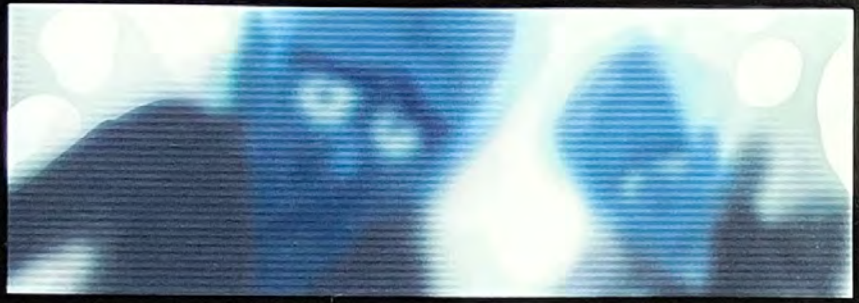
The final film is a testimony to the talent, creativity, and ingenuity of a hard-working crew. It has the thrilling, pop-operatic qualities of classic superpowered action with the added punch of 3D technology. It has the comedy of cartoon destruction. And underneath is the heart that really makes it all fly. This is a new kind of superhero movie.

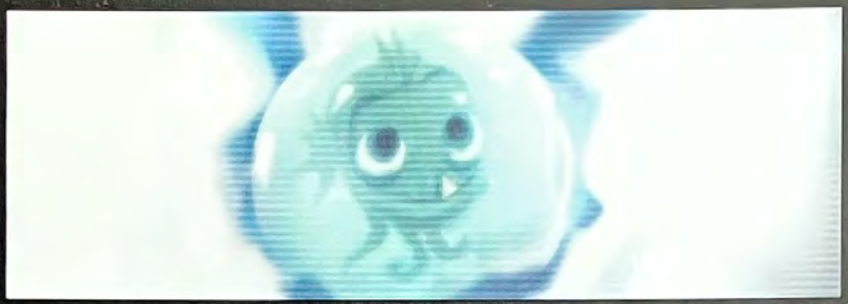
Welcome to the world of *Megamind*.

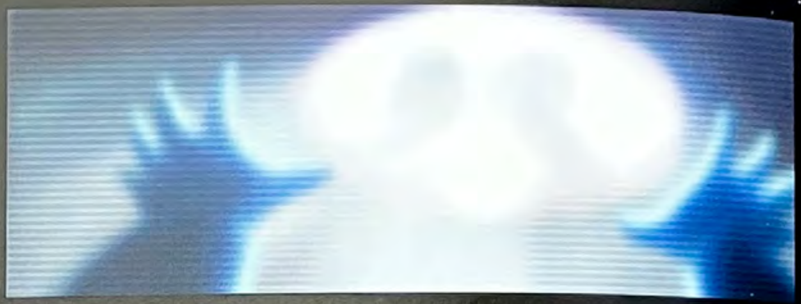


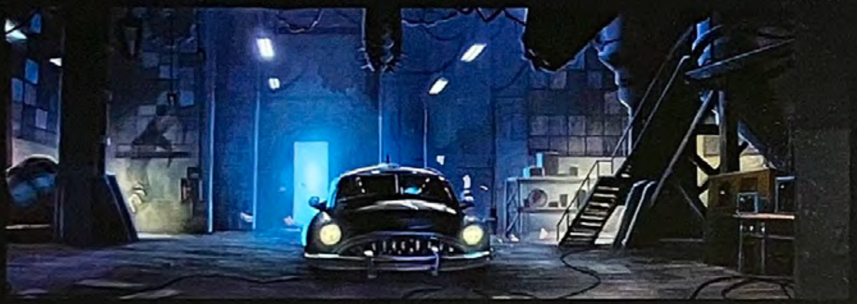
(top) MEGAMIND ROLLS UP ◦ Goro Fujita; *(right)* METRO MAN ◦ Shane Prigmore; *(following pages)* ACTS 1-3 COLOR SCRIPT ◦ Tim Lamb

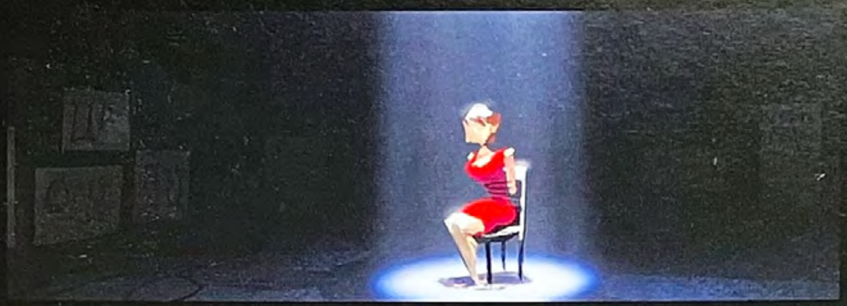
ACT 1

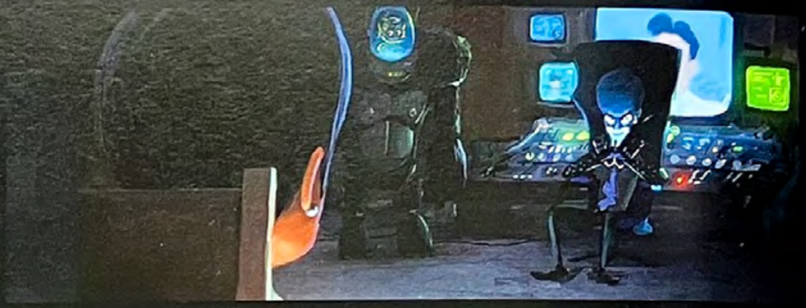


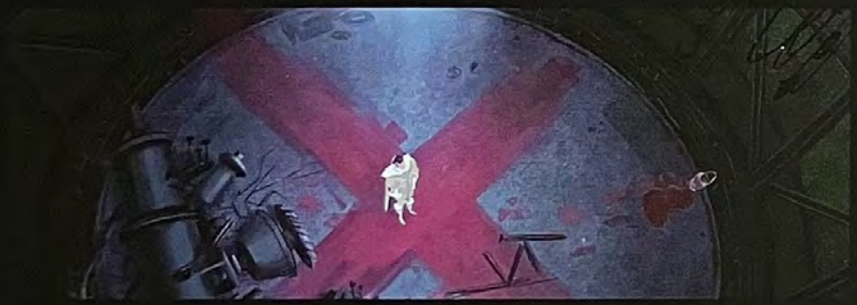


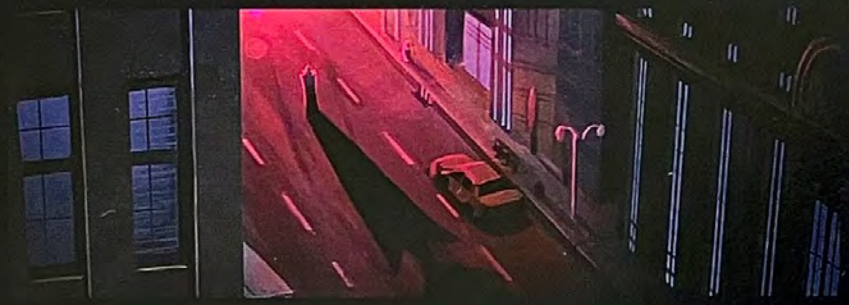


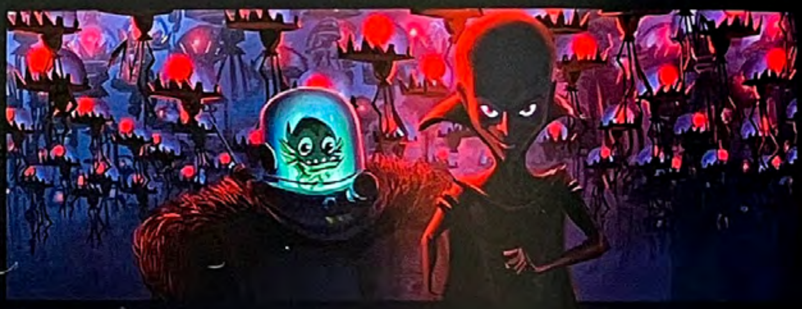


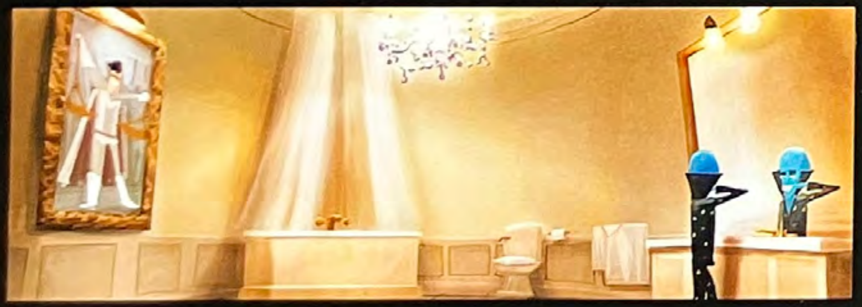


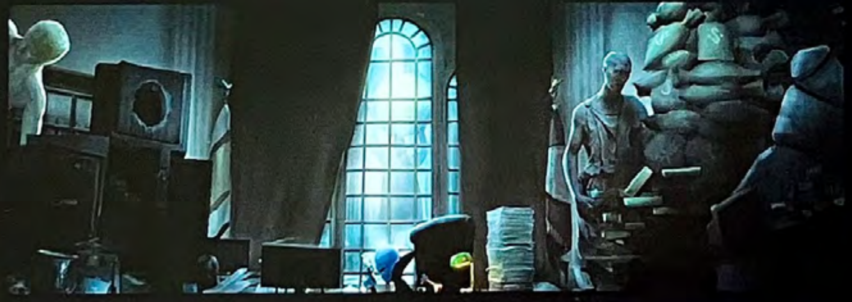












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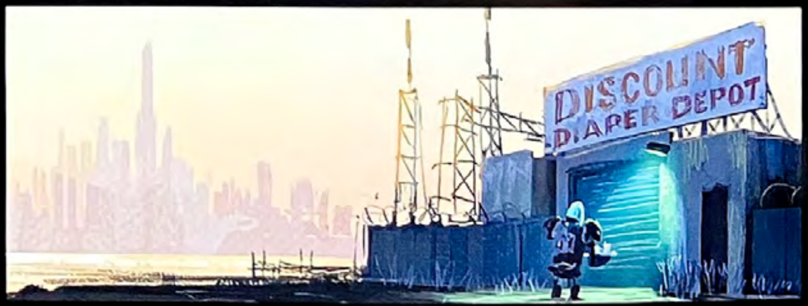
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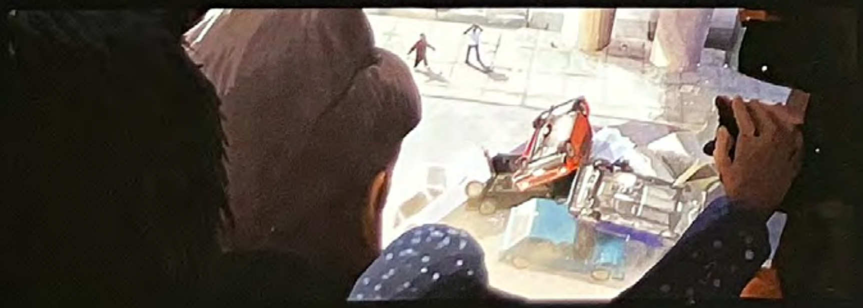

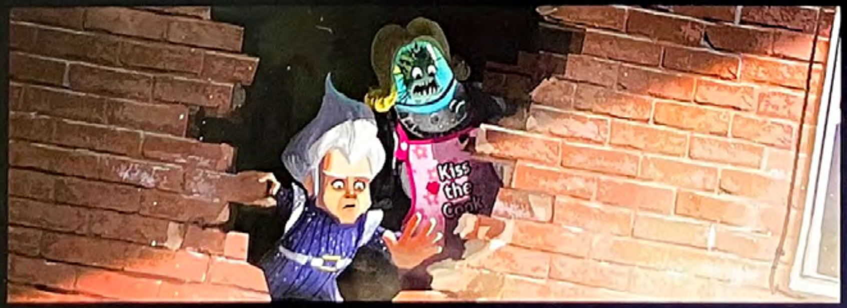

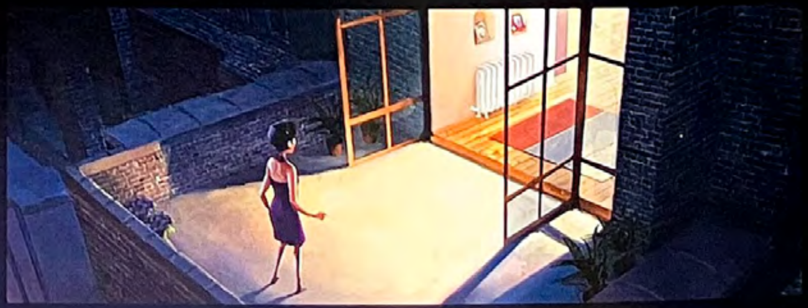

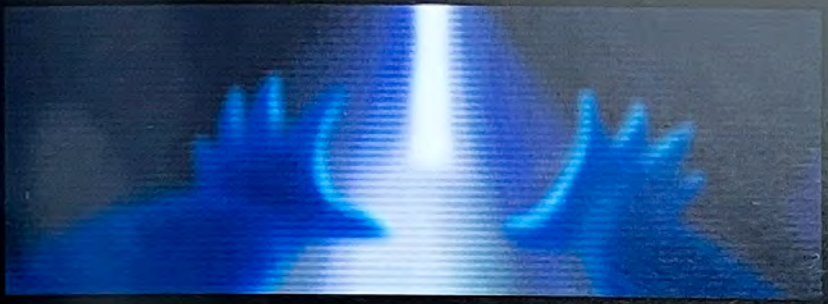
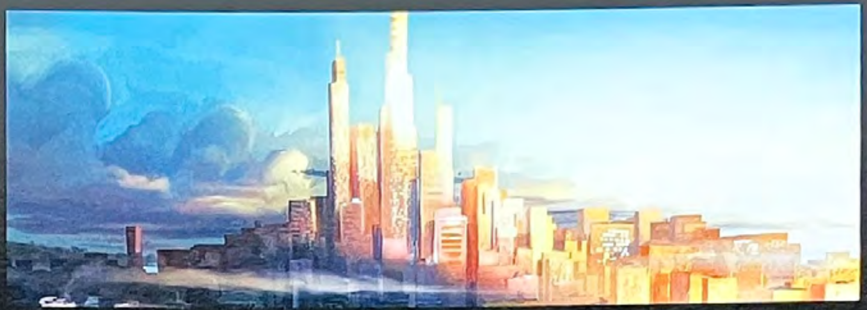
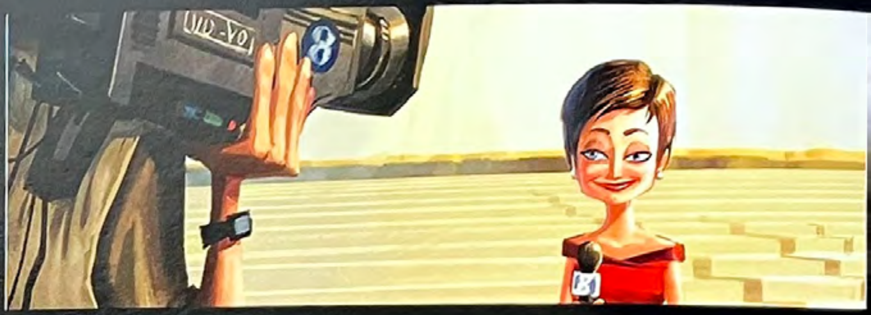
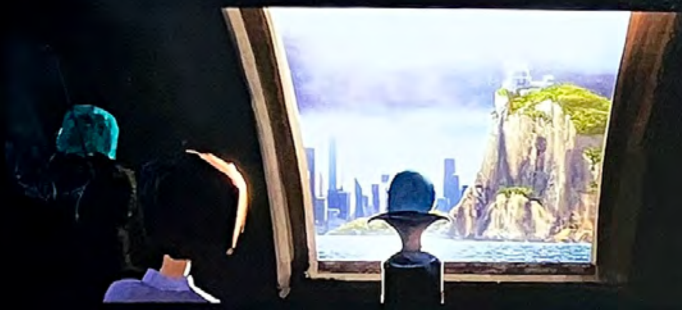
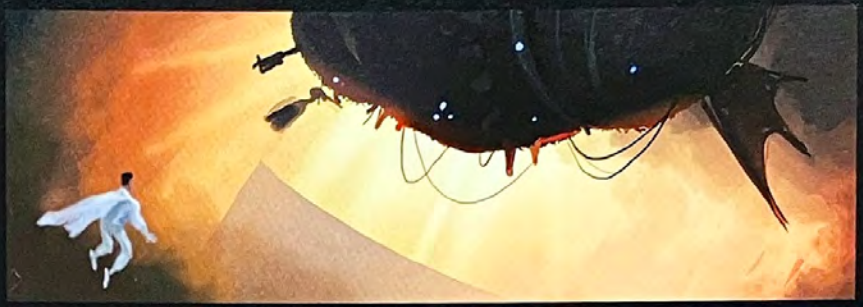
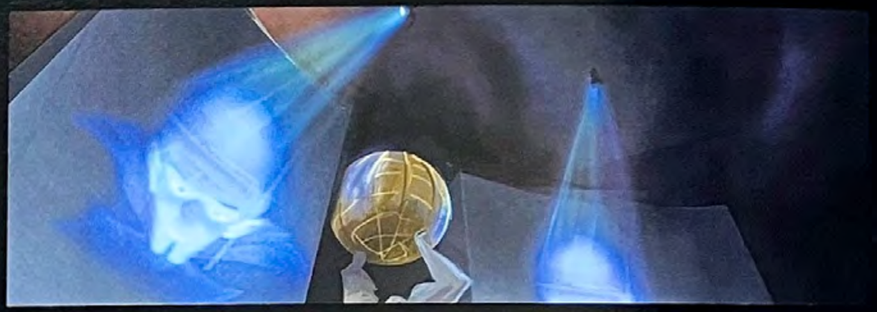
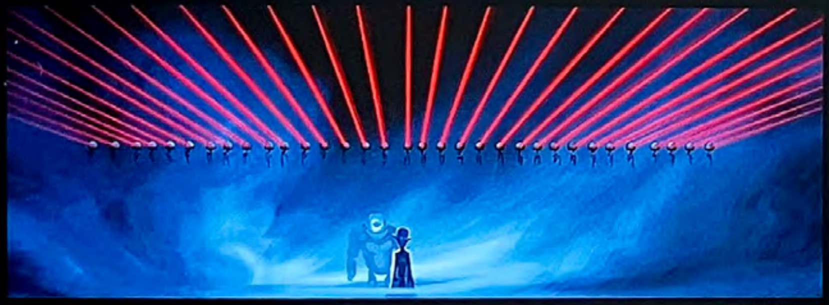
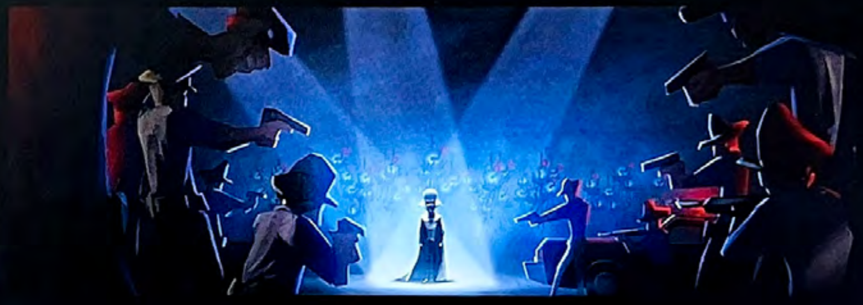
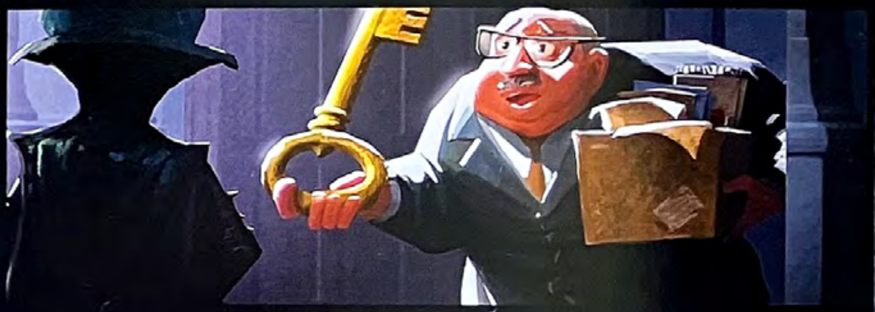
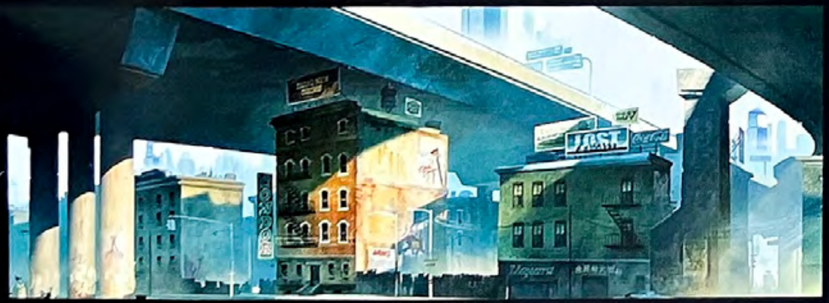
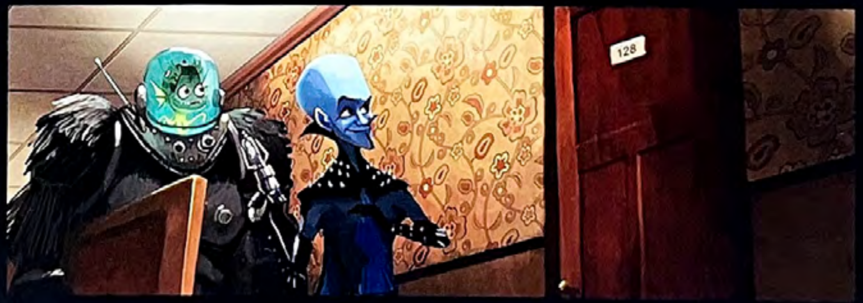
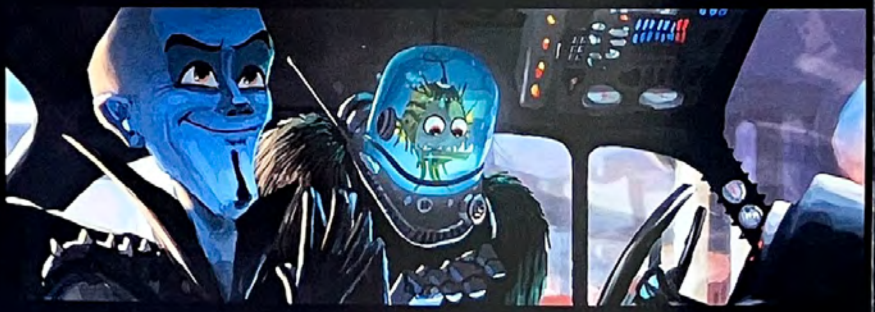
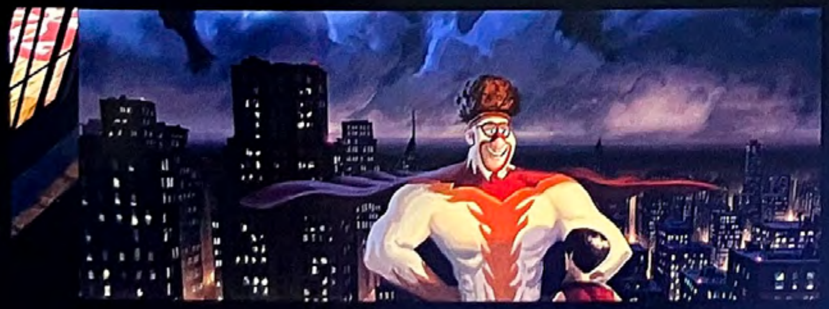
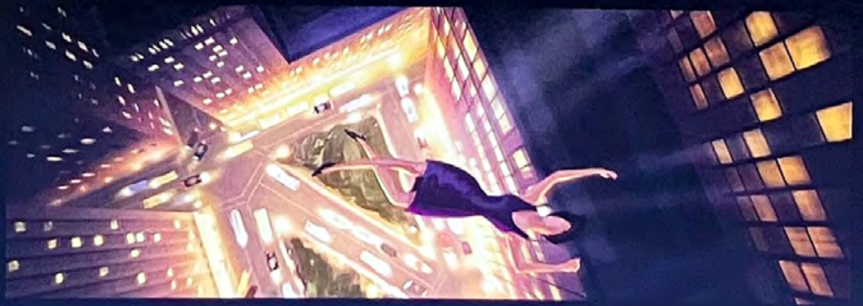
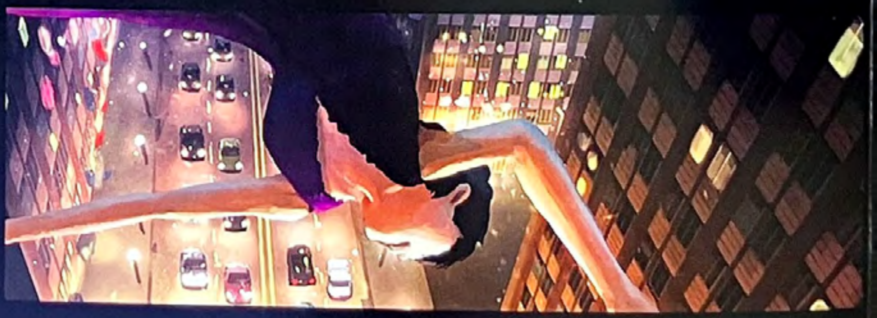

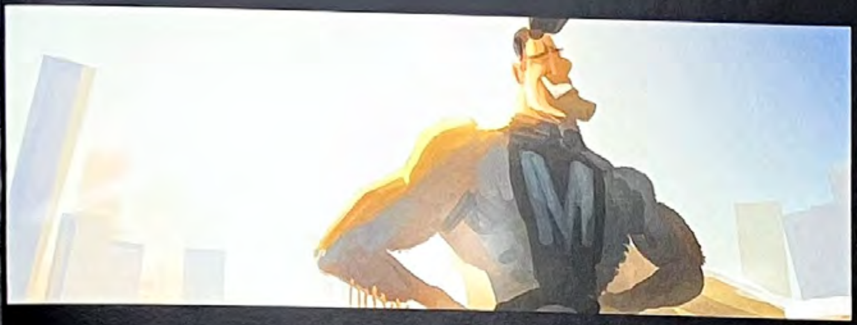
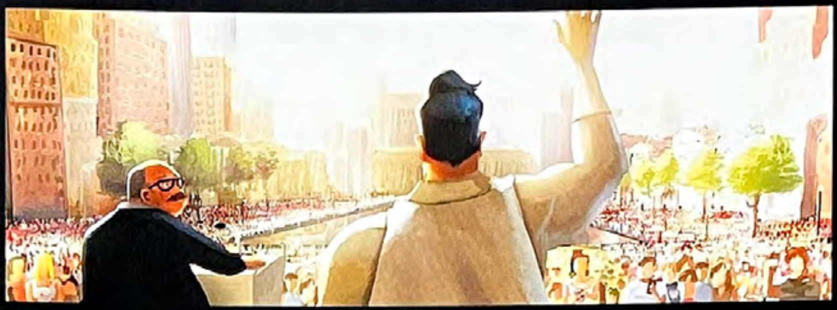
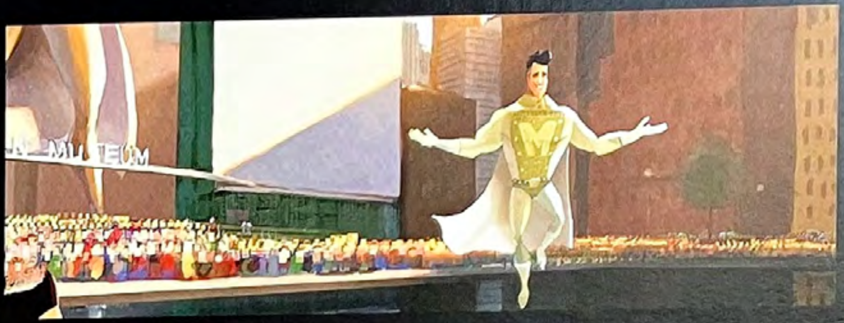
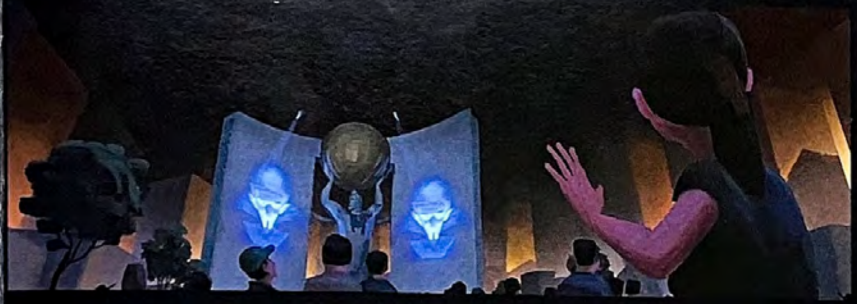
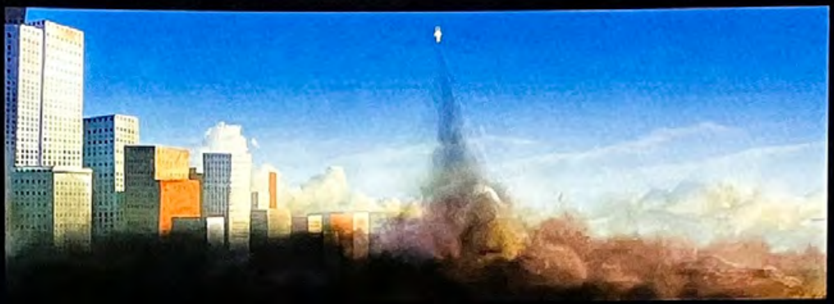
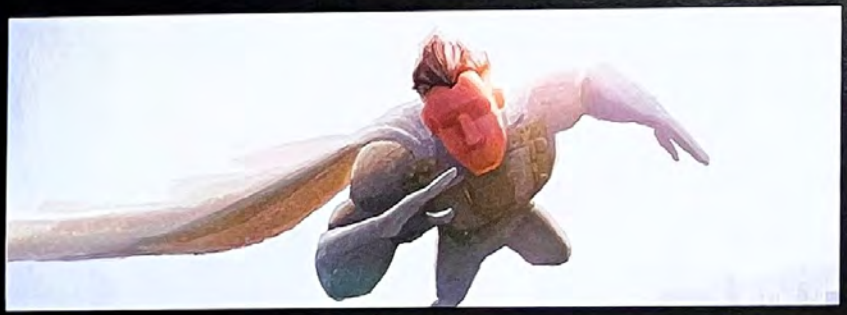
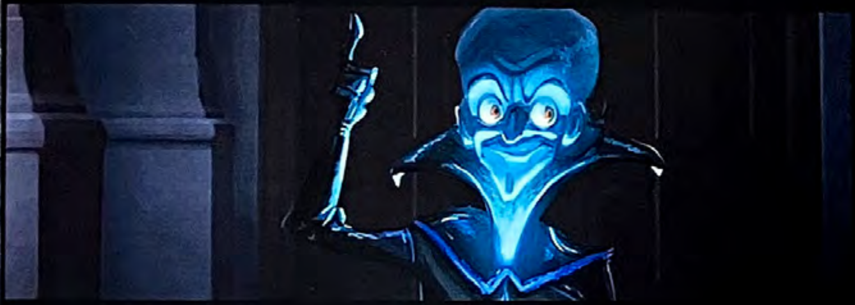
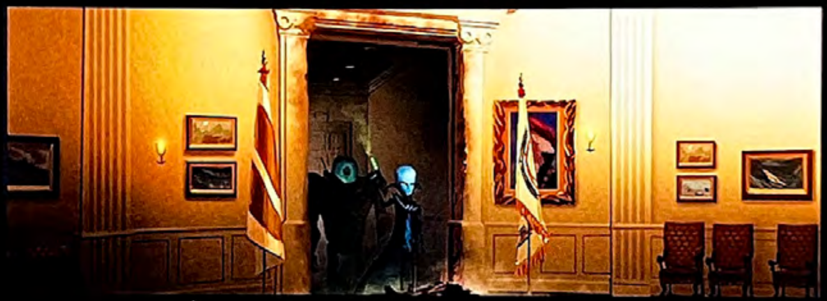
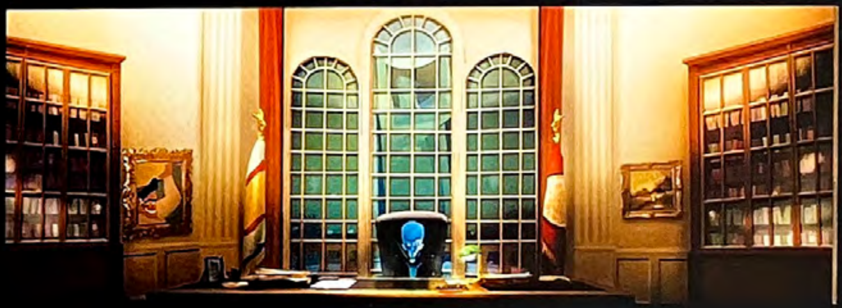
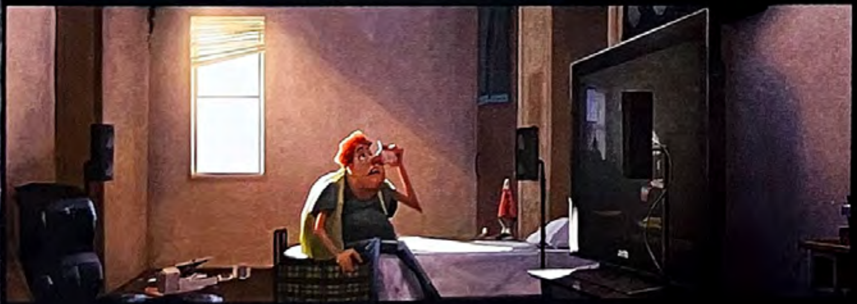
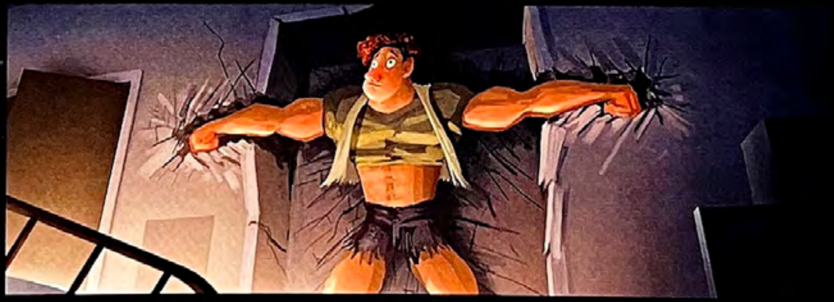
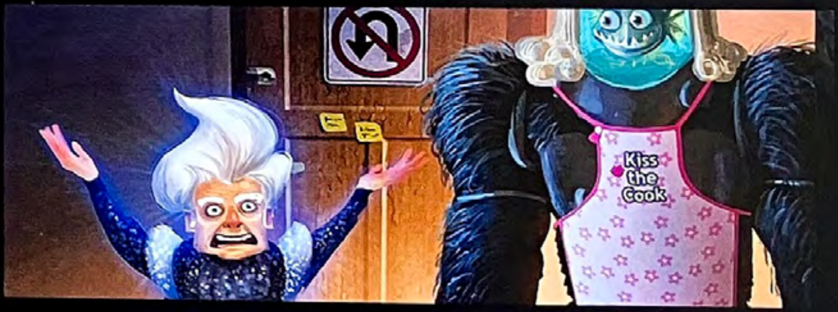
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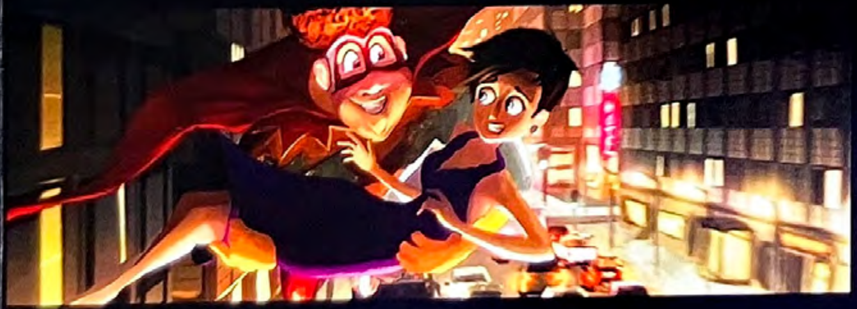
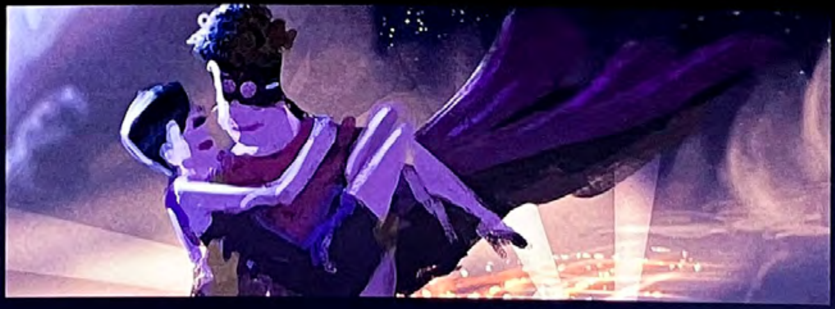
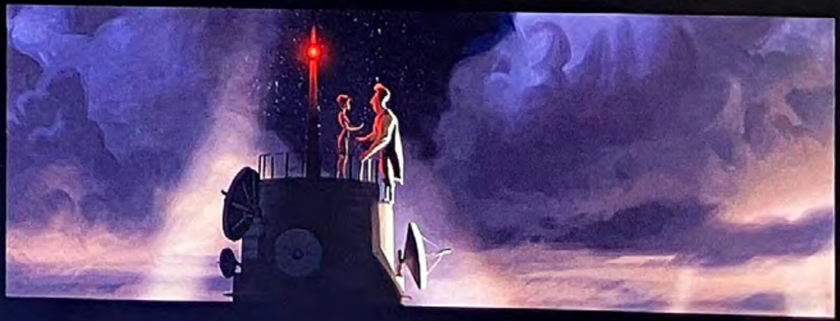

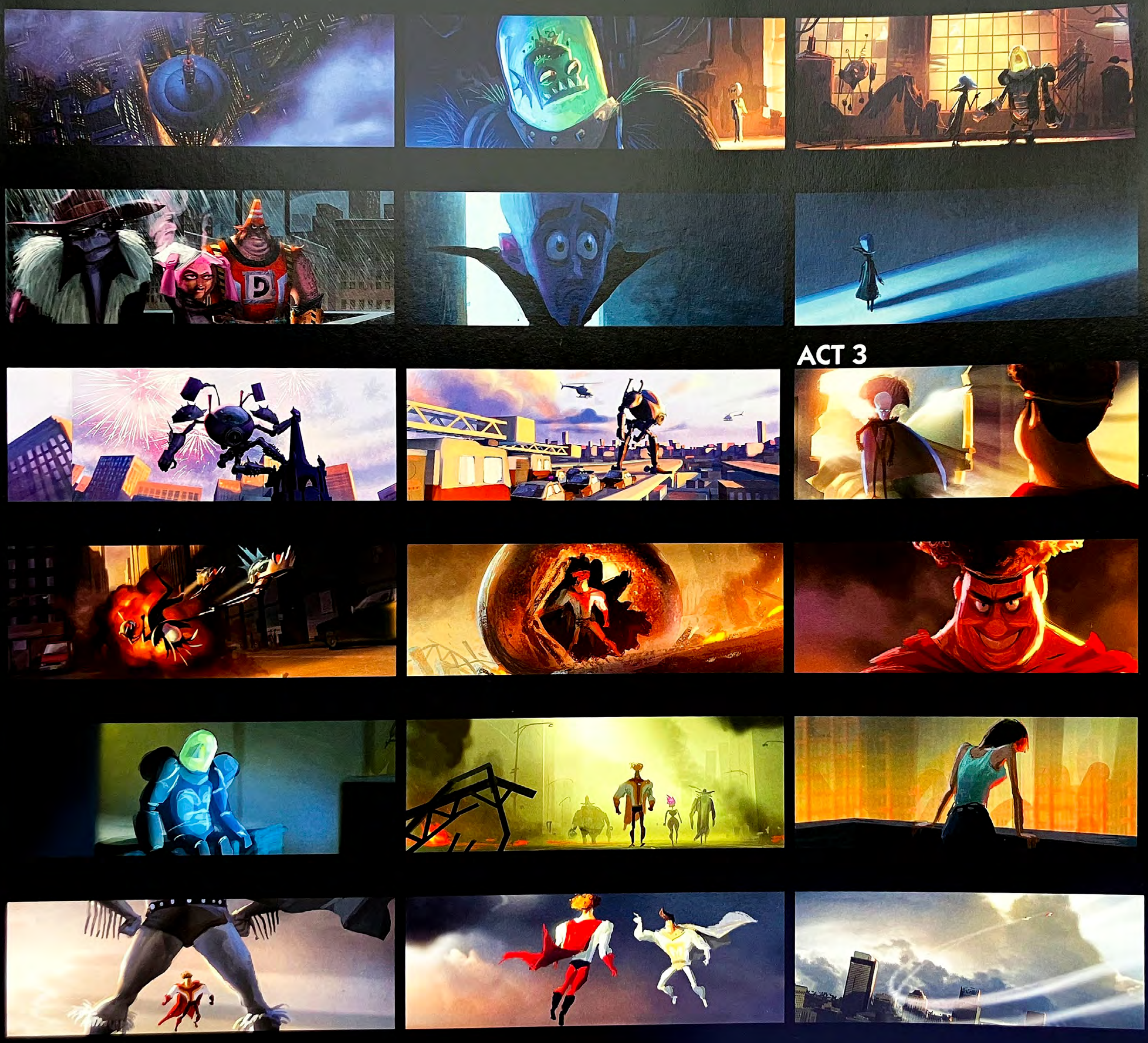
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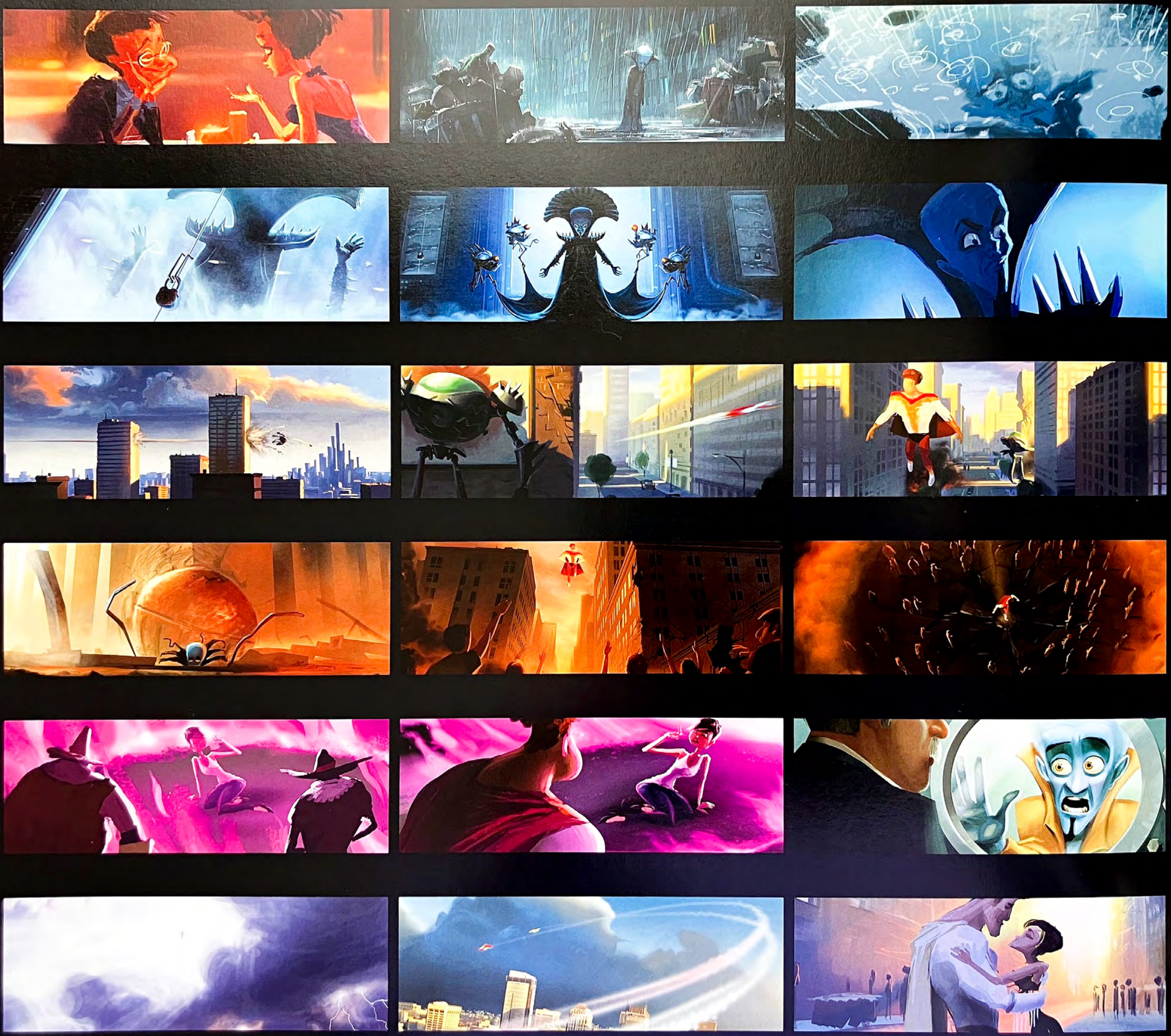
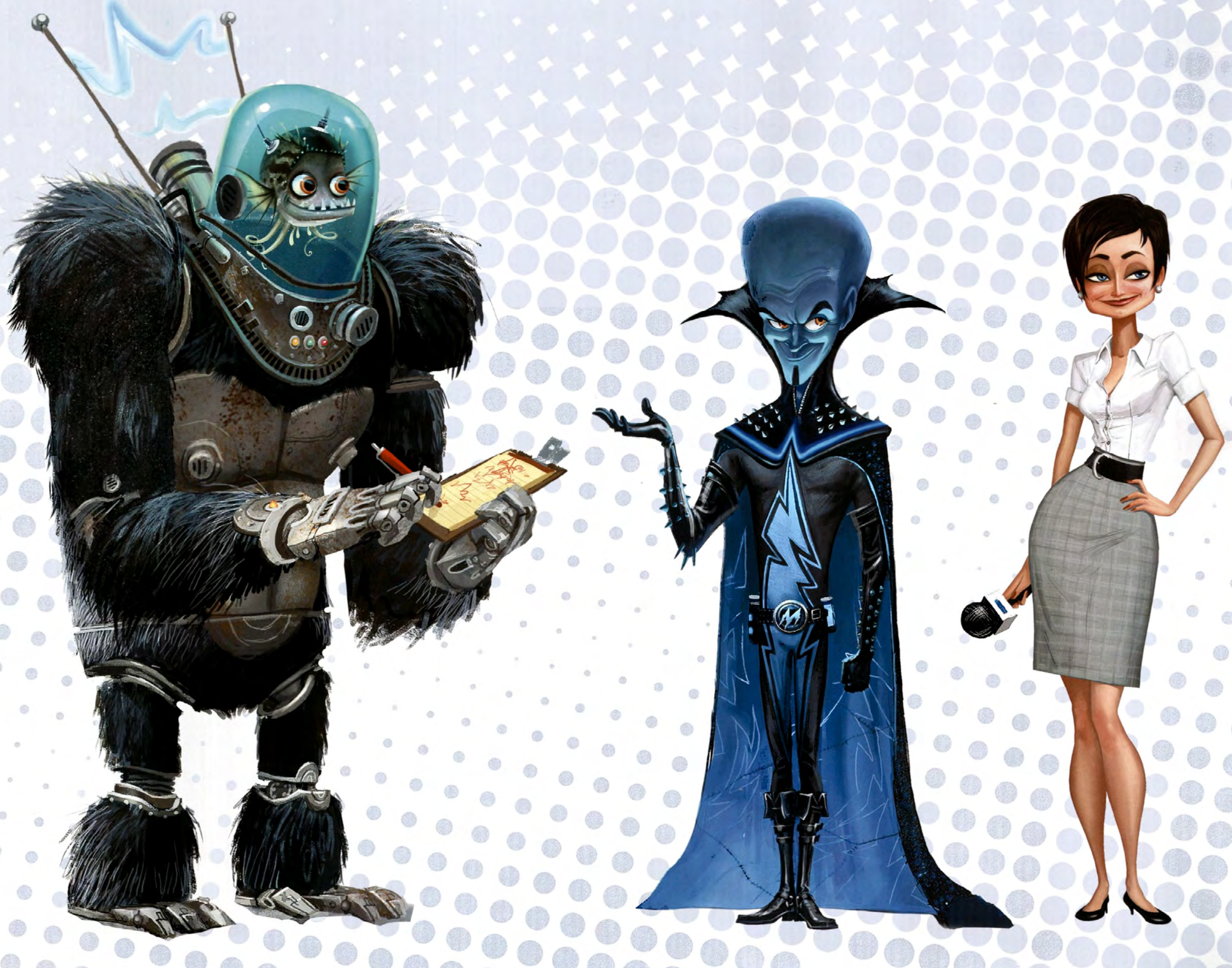
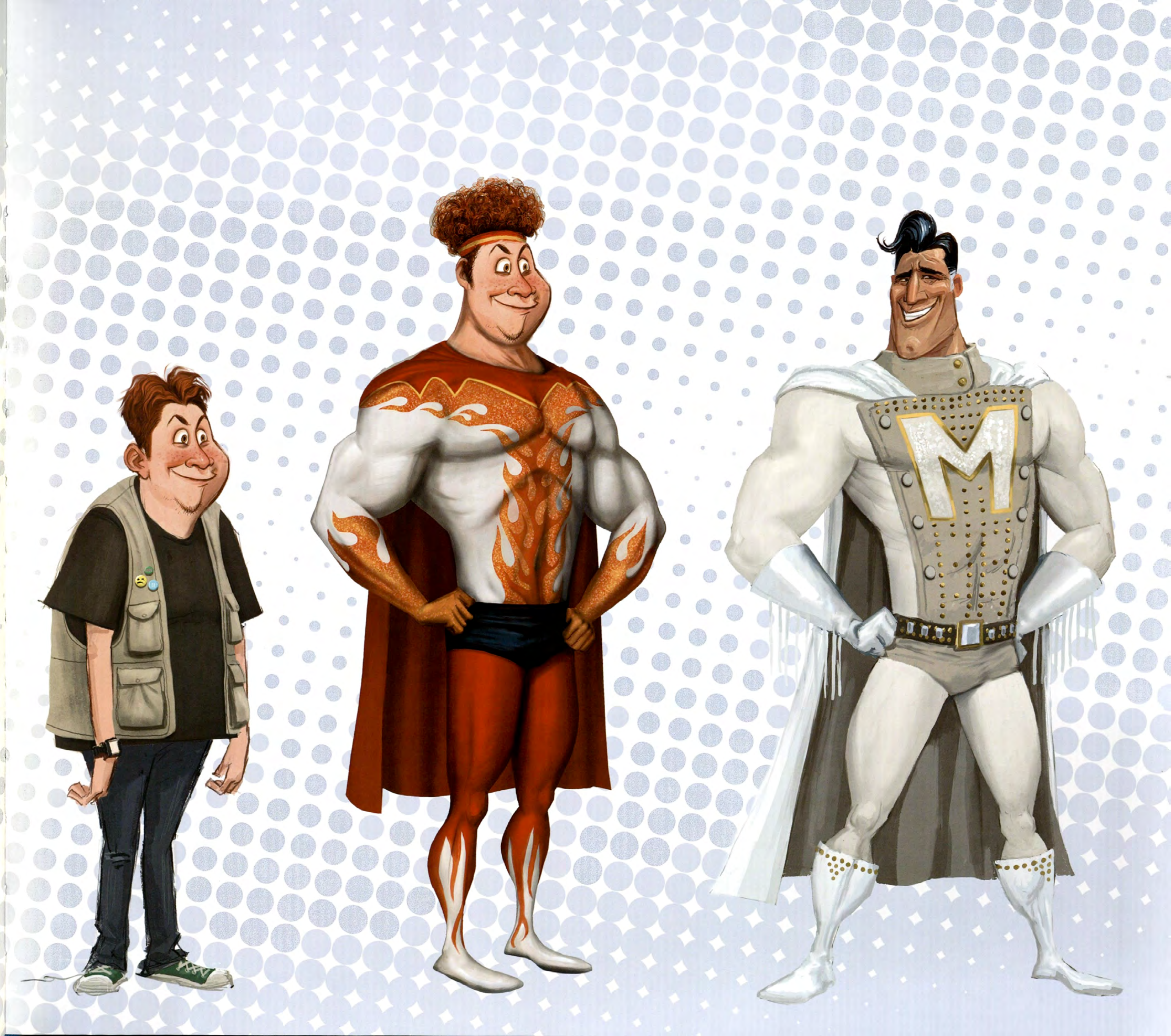


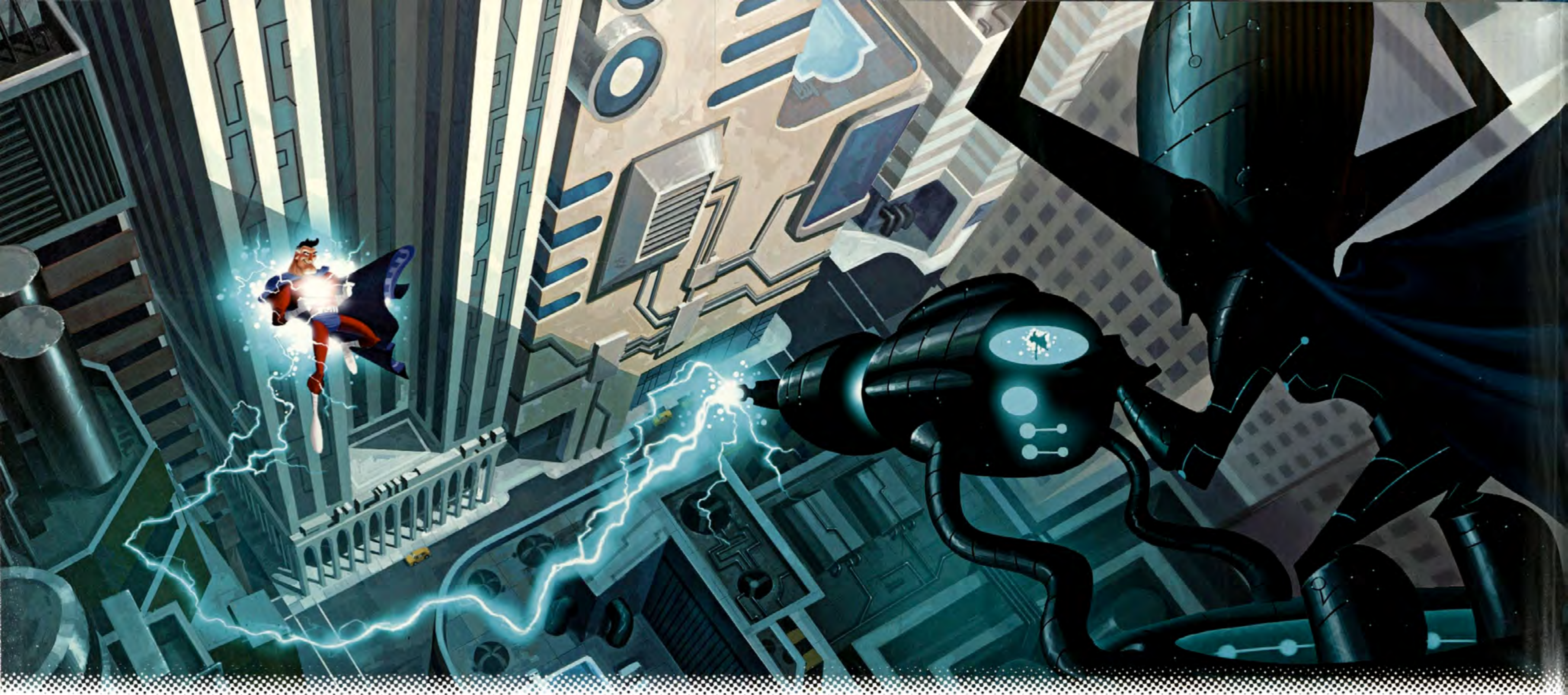
TIGHTEN

PART 1

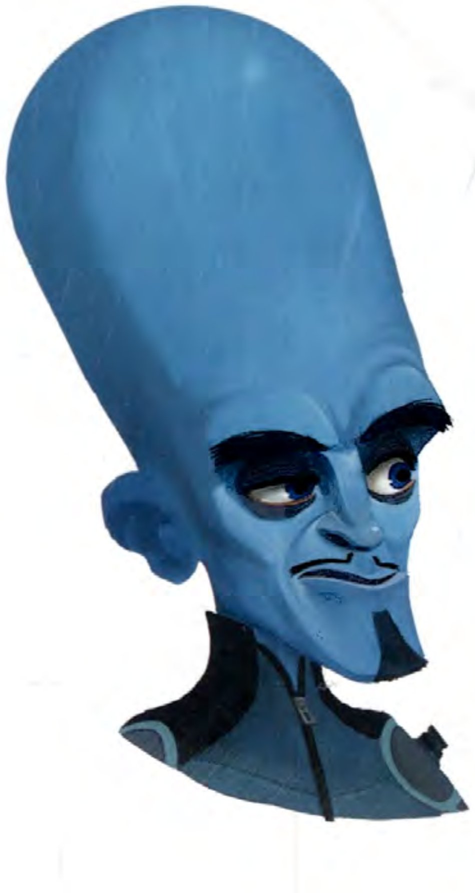
CHARACTERS





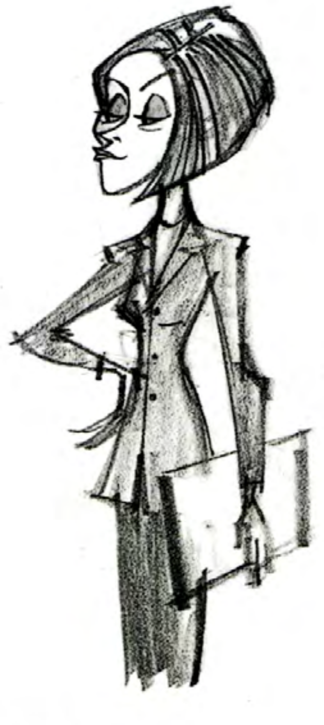


HEROES & VILLAINS

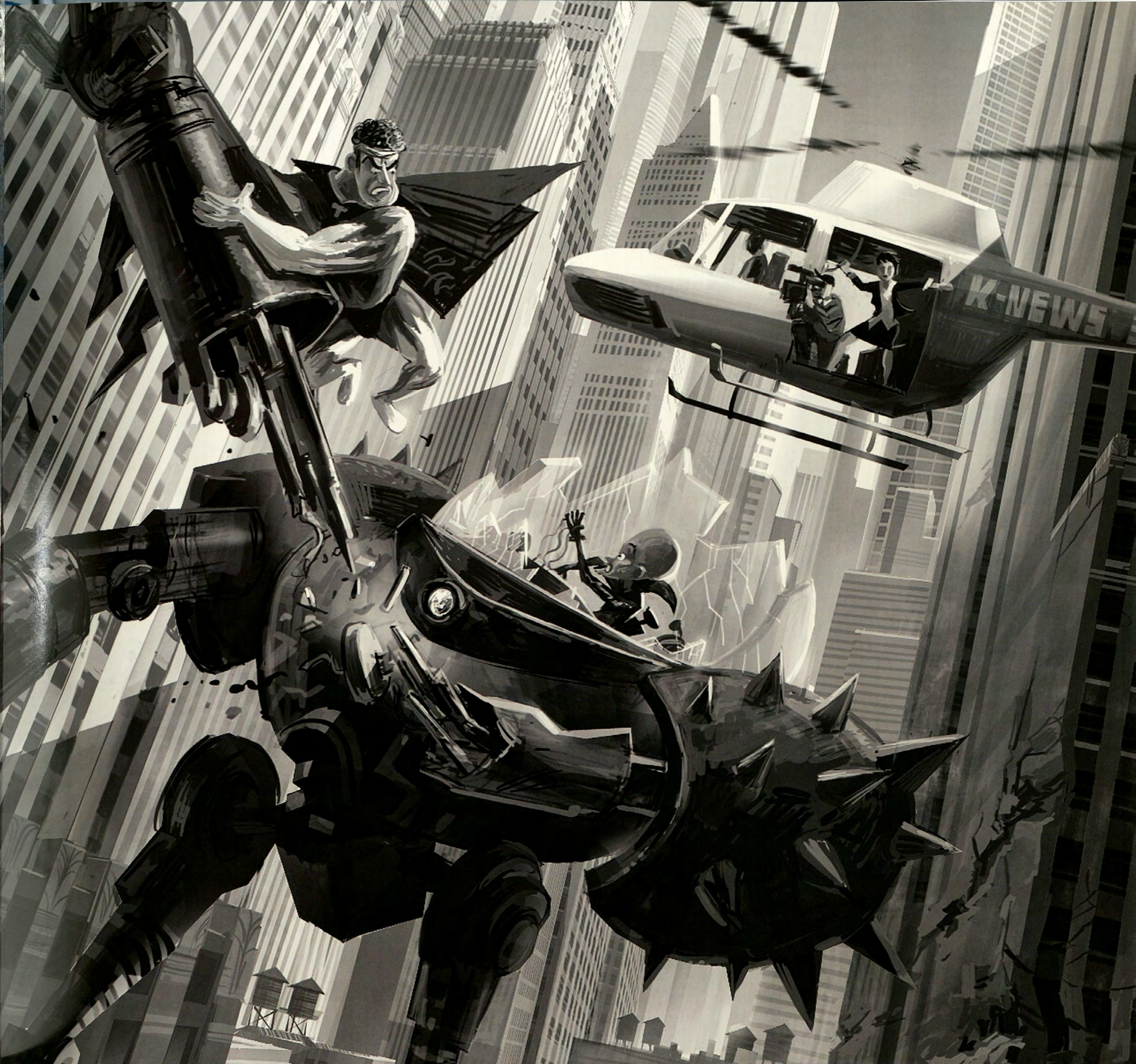


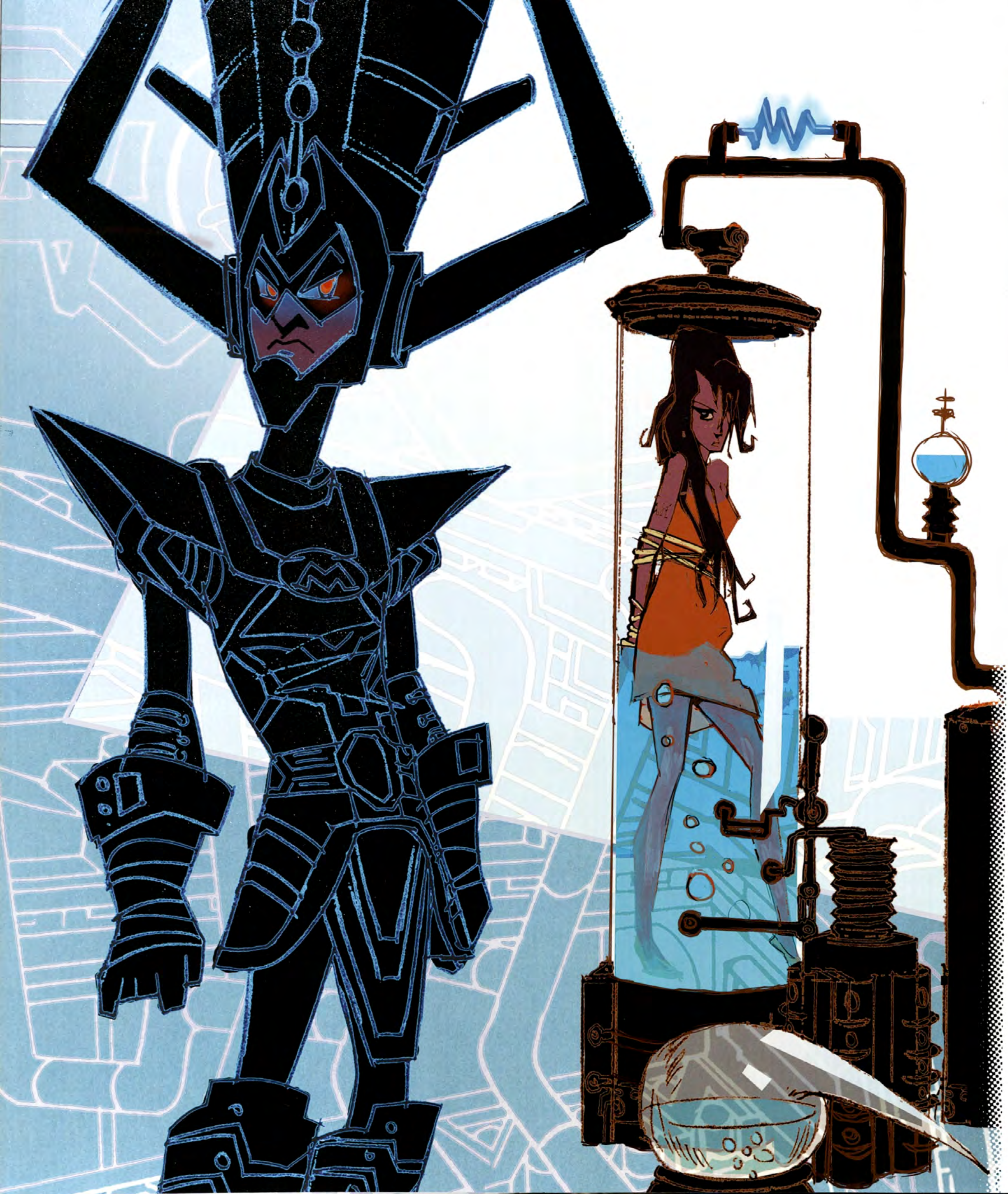
Megamind begins with a cosmic event: a planet whose inhabitants have super-advanced technology is about to be sucked into a black hole. The only survivor of the catastrophe, an infant, is rocketed to Earth. Far from being a savior from space, this baby grows up to become the criminal genius Megamind. He engages in a lifelong battle with his rival: the glorious caped hero Metro Man, who arrived here simultaneously from a similarly doomed planet. The intrepid TV reporter Roxanne Ritchi plays the role of the pawn in their conflict. After years of kidnapping her to get to Metro Man, Megamind finally realizes he'd rather have this pawn as his queen.

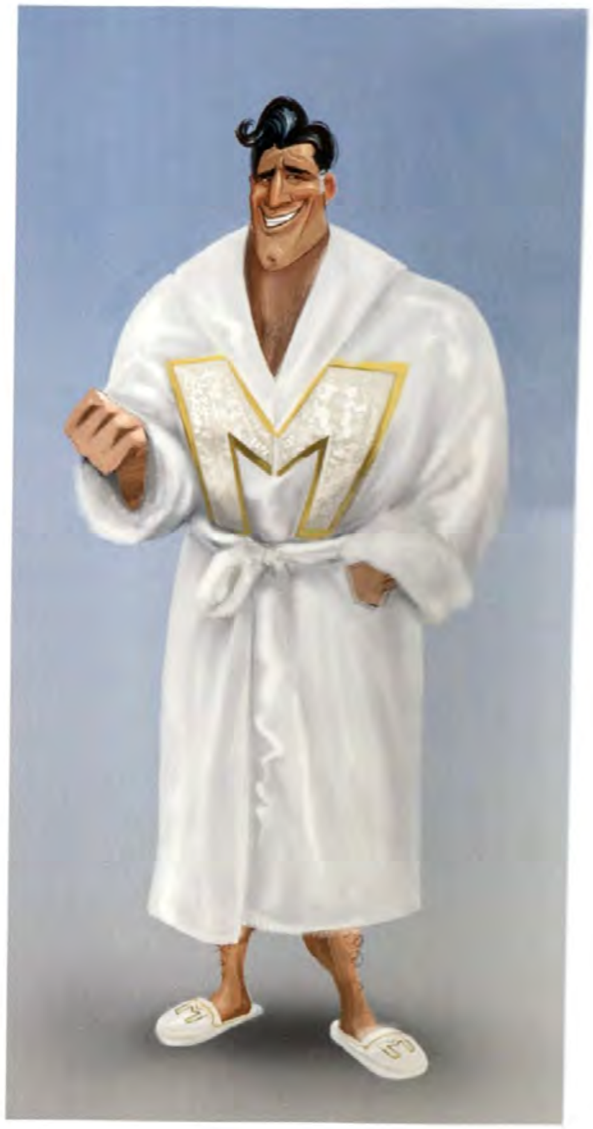
The conflict between noble superhero and cackling supervillain forms the basis of any classic comic book plot, as well as some of our most popular entertainments. Standing them on their head was the essence of *Megamind*. Often, producer Lara Breay had to explain to the production crew, "Our hero is our villain, and the real villain is the hero. The shorthand version I tried to use was this: Megamind is miscast as the bad guy. We see it before he does—the hero he's destined to become."



(previous pages) CHARACTER LINEUP ◦ Tim Lamb & Kory Heinzen; *(top)* FINAL BATTLE ◦ Rich Daskas; *(left)* MEGAMIND ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(above)* ROXANNE ◦ Andy Bialk; *(opposite)* TIGHTEN & MEGAMIND BATTLE ◦ Alex Puvilland

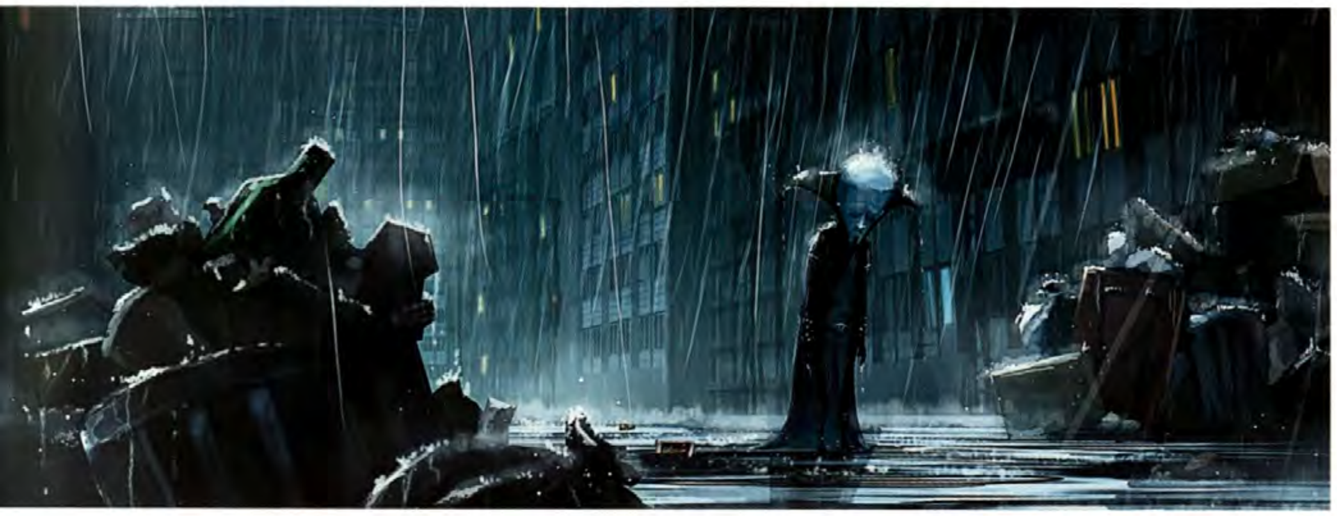

K-NEWS

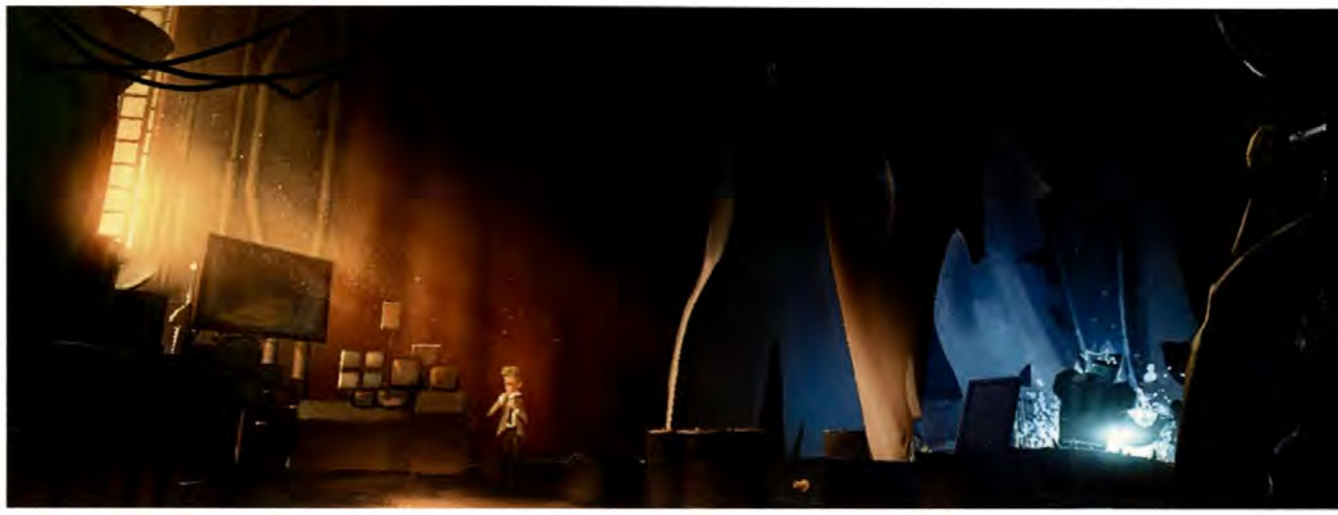




> "A good, solid story is like the foundation of a house: if you've got a good foundation, you can change where you put the walls, the size of the rooms, the color of the paint, and the textures and treatments you use."
>
> —DENISE CASCINO, PRODUCER

(left) BOILED ◦ Kendal Cronkhite; *(above)* METRO MAN ROBE ◦ Chin Ko; *(opposite, top left)* MEGAMIND SAD IN THE RAIN ◦ Goro Fujita; *(opposite, top right)* MINION IN THE LAIR ◦ Kory Heinzen *(opposite, right)* TIGHTEN COSTUME ◦ Tim Lamb





Head of story Catherine Rader says that "the relationship between Megamind and Metro Man appears to be symbiotic. Megamind believes that there is a mutual respect, a sportsmanship to their battles, and that good and evil are integral to each other. Megamind regards Metro Man as the ultimate adversary. Later, when Megamind discovers that Metro Man had quit the hero gig because there was no challenge in it, it shatters his notion of the hero and challenges his identity as a worthy villain."

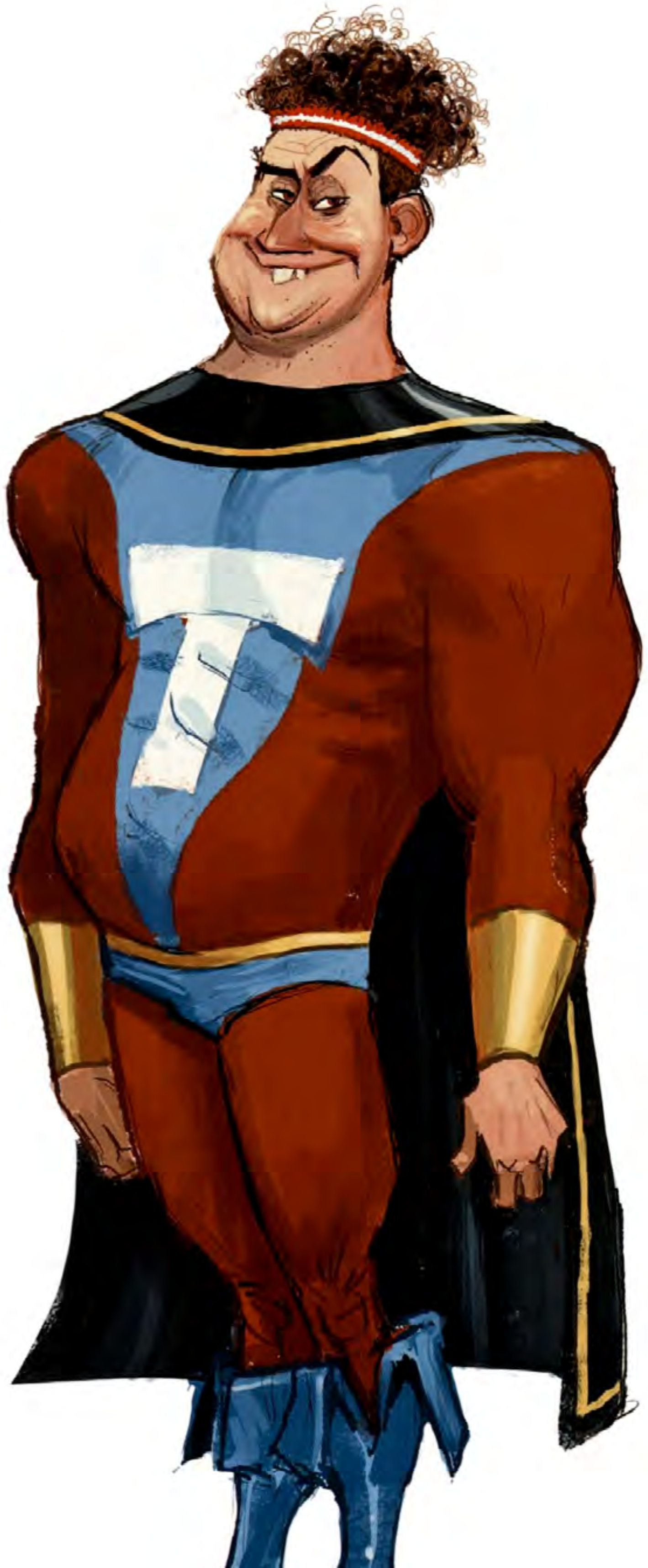
Having essential, archetypical characters modeled on the high fliers and low skulkers of decades' worth of these stories in print gave the filmmakers plenty of room to fill in the outlines. Director Tom McGrath, of the successful *Madagascar* series, notes that there is something poetic and simple in *Megamind*'s tale of a single character that invites this sort of deepening. "What's great about *Megamind* is having a single character to funnel the story through. You can get more emotionally invested."

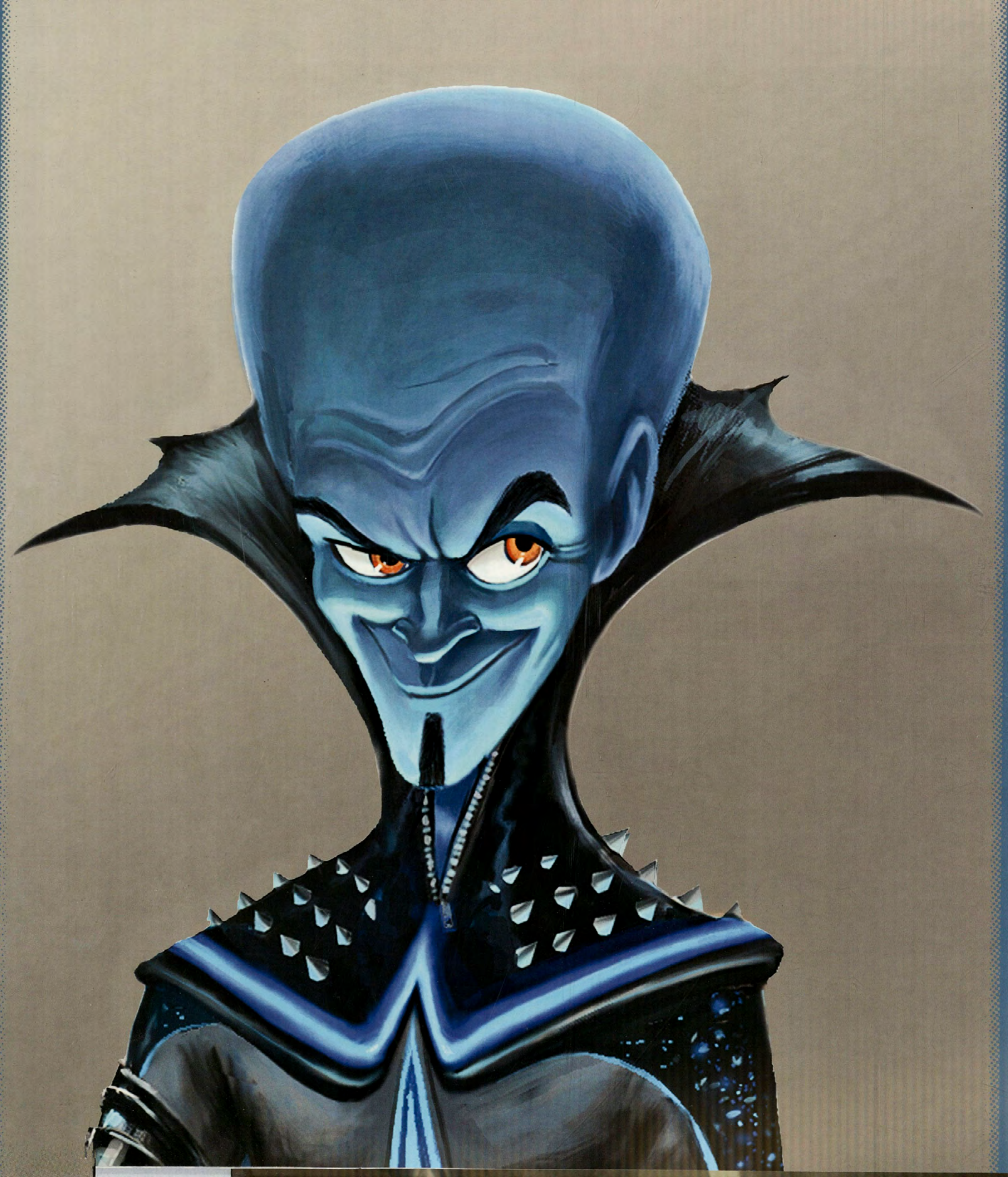
Finally, Megamind's character development simplified the story and deepened the emotional content. As Rader puts it, "My initial concern was that *Megamind* was essentially tailored for fans of superhero comic books living in their parents' basement. What we have here is, among other things, a much more current, heartfelt yet irreverent comedy."

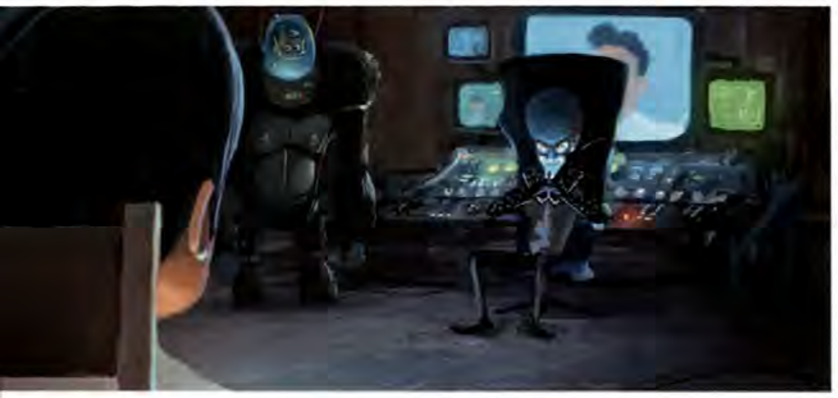
In the service of that comedy, *Megamind* emphasizes the ballet of hero, villain, and heroine. Ultimately, animators have to tackle the problem of creating a story for maximum appeal to every viewer, from children to elders. Herein lies an old Hollywood joke: a film ought to be about the pretty problems of pretty people.

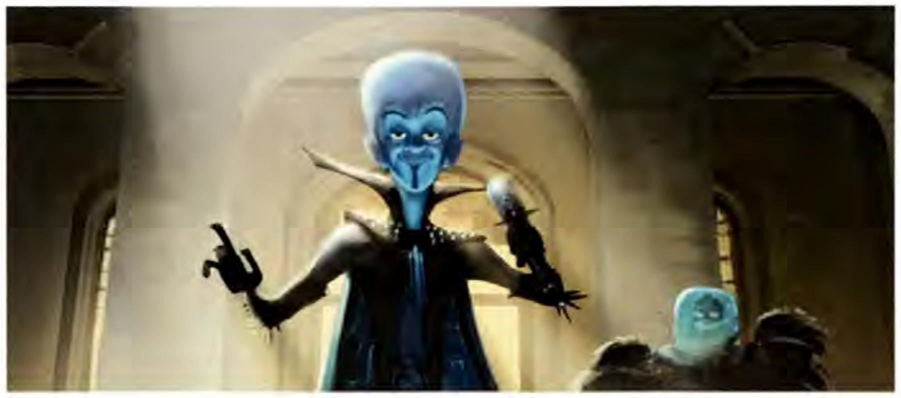
Fair enough—but then you need to define *pretty.*

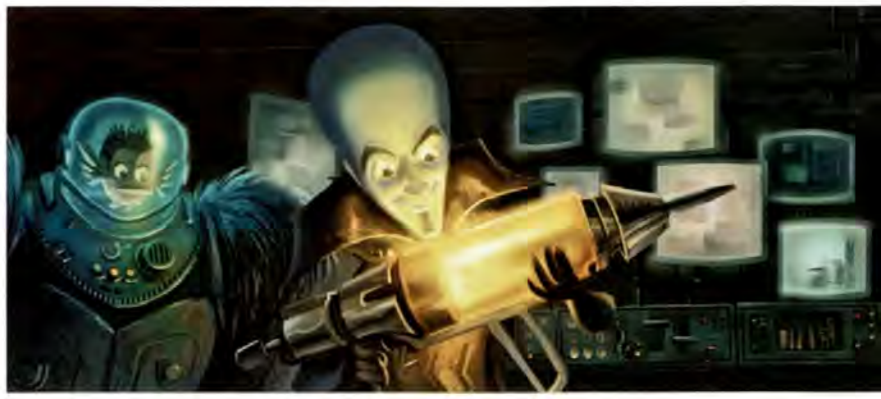
The *Shrek* series' message that beauty is on the inside could be a guide for *Megamind.* The protagonist here—blue, bald, and bulbous headed—has to overcome the world's assumption that he is a monster. The artists and animators at DreamWorks Animation were faced with the challenge of creating a film that would allow an audience to find sympathy for the dastardly. As they did with Shrek the ogre, they've taken a familiar type—the comic book villain—and humanized him; exploring his true character, illuminating his soul, and ultimately delivering a very funny movie with a subtle moral message.

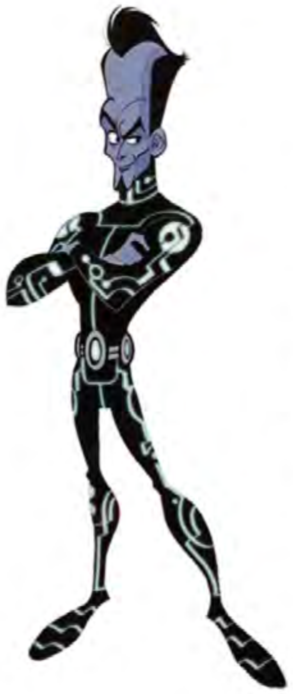












MEGAMIND

The self-described "incredibly handsome criminal genius and master of all villainy" was once a stranger to our Earth, with as much potential for good as any earthling. Although the brainy blue alien from the Glaupunk Quadrant landed his ship in prison, where he was taught the way of the lawbreaker, he realizes at the end of the movie that he has the ability to choose his own destiny, and that he can choose to do good.

The characterization of Megamind's villainous persona never changed from its roots in Alan Schoolcraft and Brent Simon's original script. However, his name and look was a matter of debate.

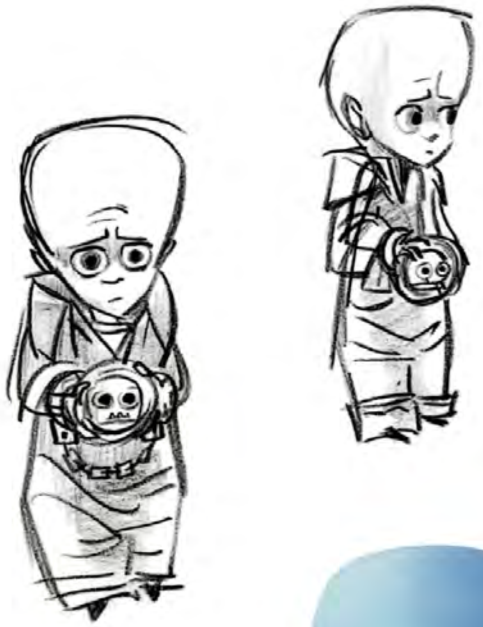
Megamind began as "Mastermind," adopting as his proper name the role he assumes as an accomplished criminal. Looking for something that played up his fantastic powers a bit more, filmmakers also tried out the Nietzschean handle "Oobermind" for a time. Megamind's superpowered rival participated even more directly in this vexed philosophical legacy, being known originally as "Uberman" (hence the curling letter *U* on some early versions of Metro Man's costume). When it was decided that this prefix's history had too many connotations, filmmakers chose more innocent and humorous names for both.

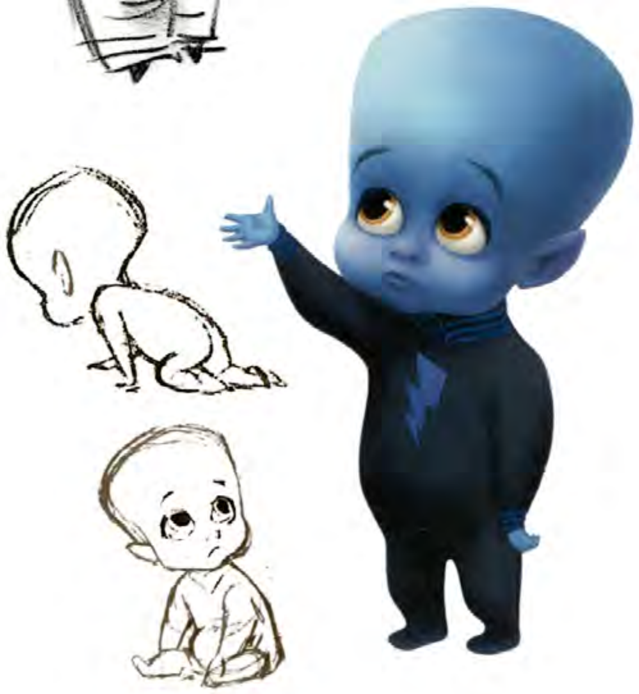
Visually, the evil villain finally known as Megamind was, in character designer Andy Bialk's earliest sketches, a suave, brandy-snifter-wielding meanie in '70s safari suits, or a turtle-necked beatnik. Production designer David James notes, "In previous iterations, Megamind had been very high tech and over the top in snobby ways, with all of these unlimited resources, like many supervillains in history."

Some designs in the early brainstorming stages were even inspired by comic book legend Jack "King" Kirby's designs for the Marvel villain Galactus, Pillager of Planets, with his massive Art Deco helmet and twin boomerang-shaped aerials.

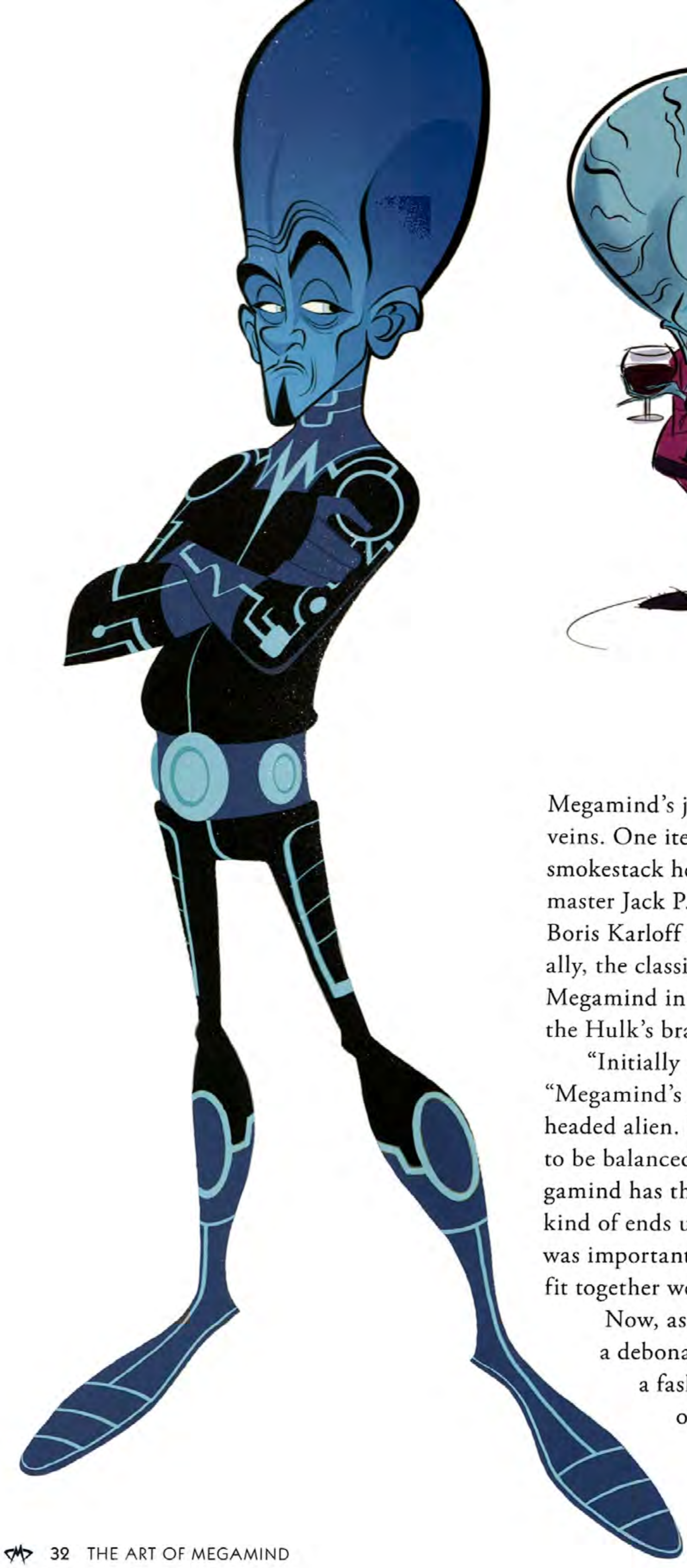
At that point, it was time to bring Megamind closer to Earth. James recalls, "The idea was to put him in a position of being a bit more of an underdog: to have him survive by his wits alone, and his industriousness."

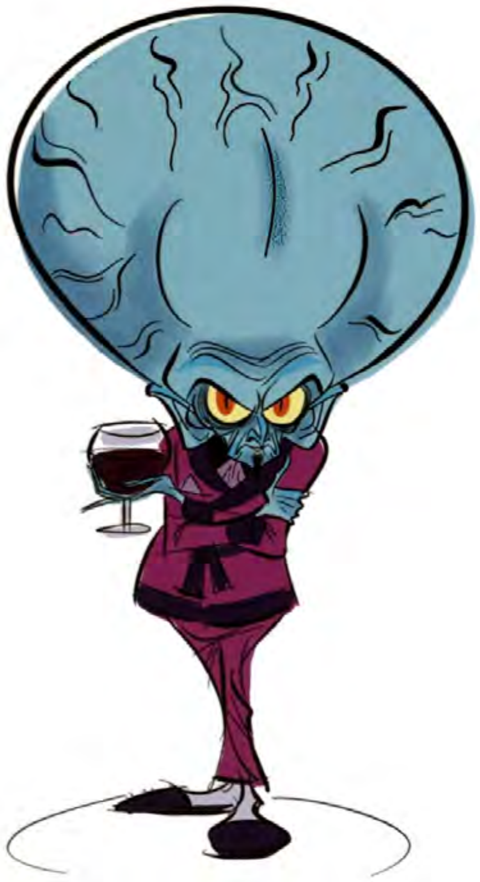
One factor, though, remained constant throughout: the size of Megamind's head had to be prodigious. It both swells and changes shape in various development art. Sometimes it resembles a massive thumb, a banana, an onion dome, or an ostrich egg. Sometimes it's shaped like a cylindrical vacuum tube from a vintage guitar amplifier. Character designer Craig Kellman visualized

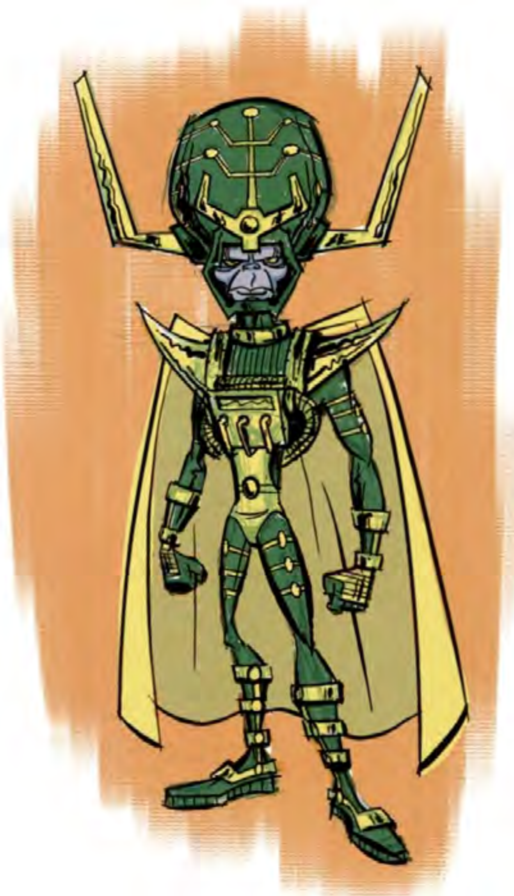


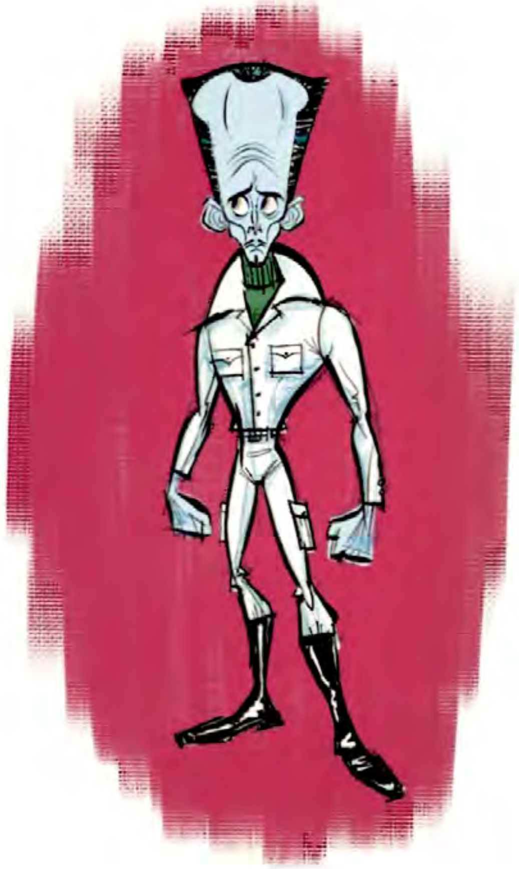


(opposite) MEGAMIND • Tim Lamb; *(top panel, left to right)* MEGAMIND GREETS ROXANNE • Goro Fujita; MEGAMIND ADDRESSES CROWD • Tim Lamb; MEGAMIND WITH DNA GUN • Ruben Perez; *(left)* MEGAMIND • Andy Bialk; *(middle)* MEGA KID • Tom McGrath; *(above)* MEGA BABY • Tim Lamb









Megamind's jumbo noggin cracked with throbbing veins. One iteration had the character sporting a smokestack head and beetle brows, like makeup master Jack P. Pierce's iconic interpretation of Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster. Eventually, the classic bald-villain look won out, placing Megamind in the same family as Lex Luthor and the Hulk's brainy nemesis, the Leader.

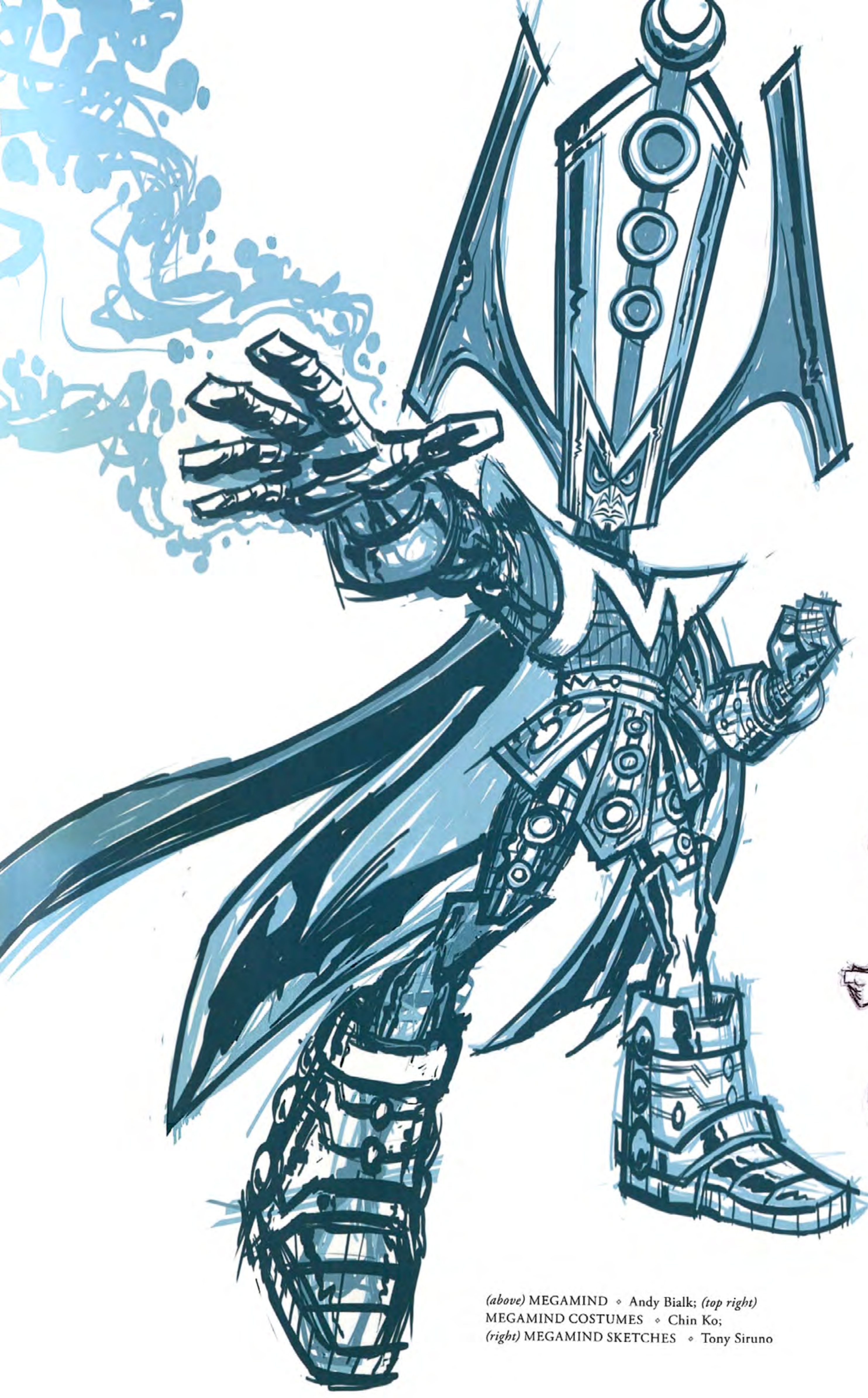
"Initially for me," says art director Tim Lamb, "Megamind's design was a sort of spindly, huge-headed alien. But extreme character design needs to be balanced with what the story requires. Megamind has this romantic interest in Roxanne, and kind of ends up courting her for a while. And so it was important to ensure that the character designs fit together well."

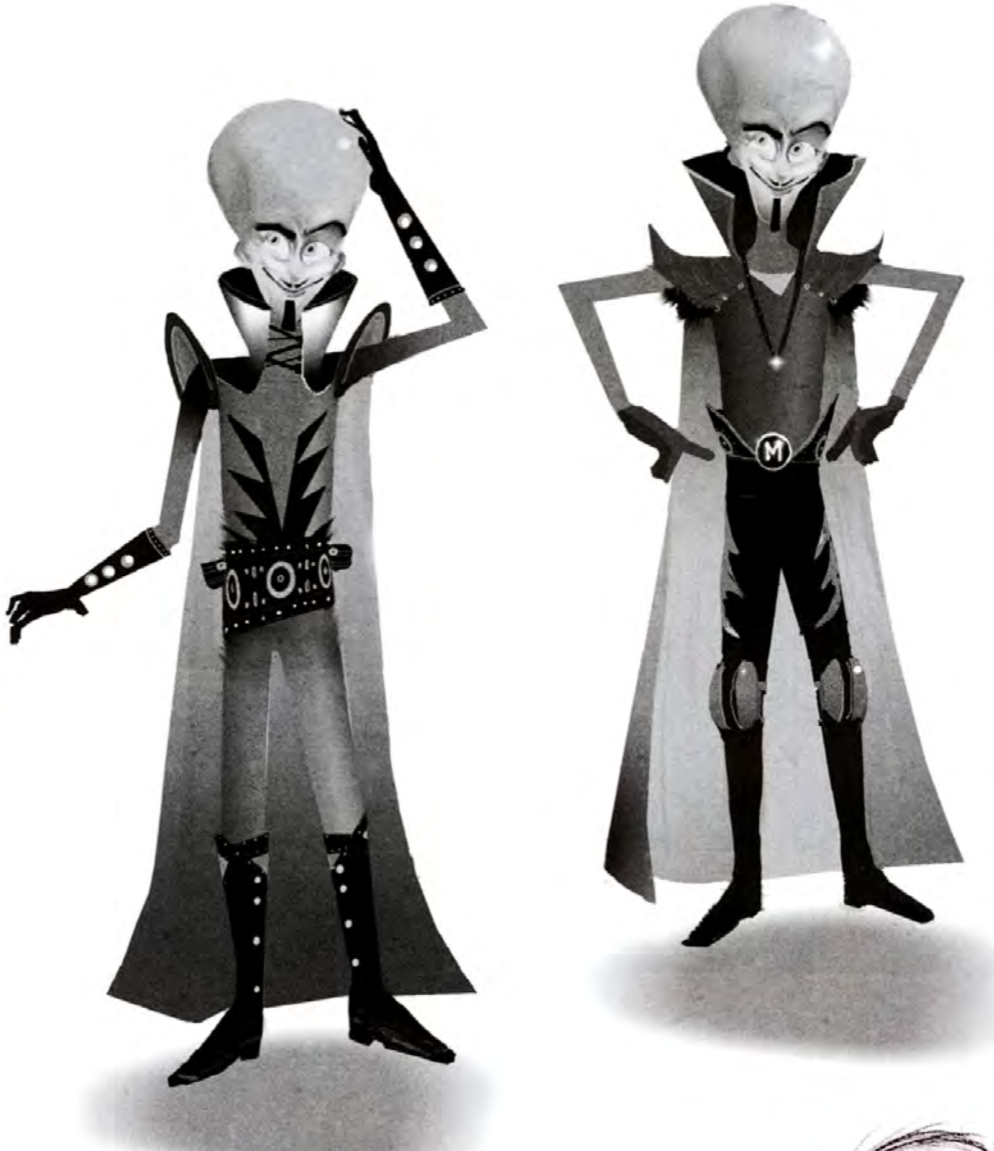
Now, as voiced by Will Ferrell, Megamind is a debonair and dashing yet childlike figure, a fashion plate attracted to a wardrobe of biker leathers and spikes. Director Tom McGrath sought a different look for Megamind's wardrobe. "In the superhero movies I see now, everything is slicked up with polycarbon fiber and airbrushed metallic costumes," he says. "If there really were superheroes in the world, though, they'd be celebrities."

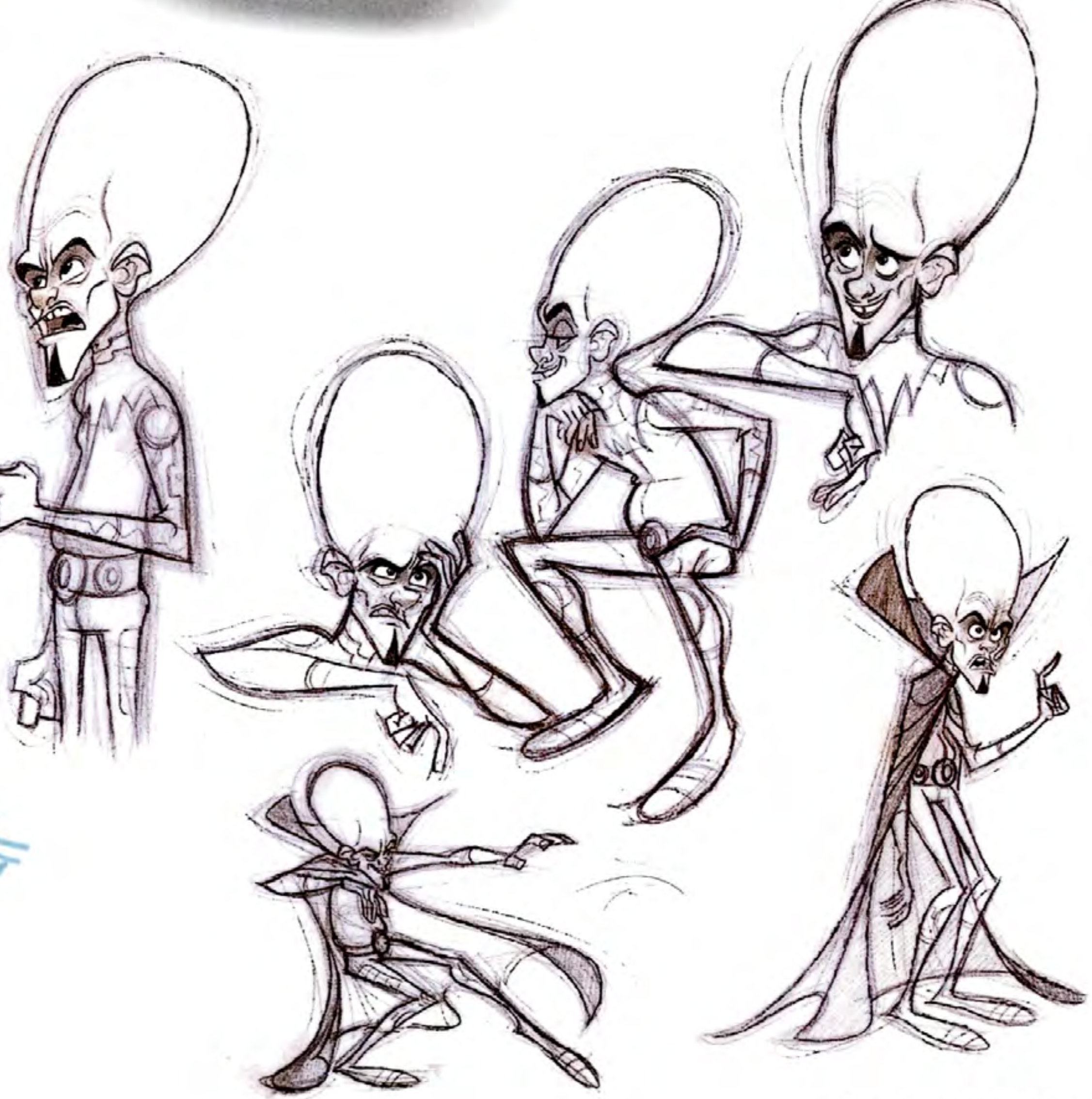
The star of the show is, says producer Lara Breay, "a lovable egomaniac. The way he outwardly looks is the reason why he's cast in the role of villain. But he's exuberant, he's optimistic, and he's hilariously funny. These are the reasons we love the character even when he's at his most misguided."

"We do charge him with being the villain, but we know he isn't really a killer at heart," says producer Denise Cascino. "He actually has a pretty high moral code." And he has his reasons: depraved because he was deprived, Megamind is less a public enemy than a bad-guy wrestler, a good/bad rock star.

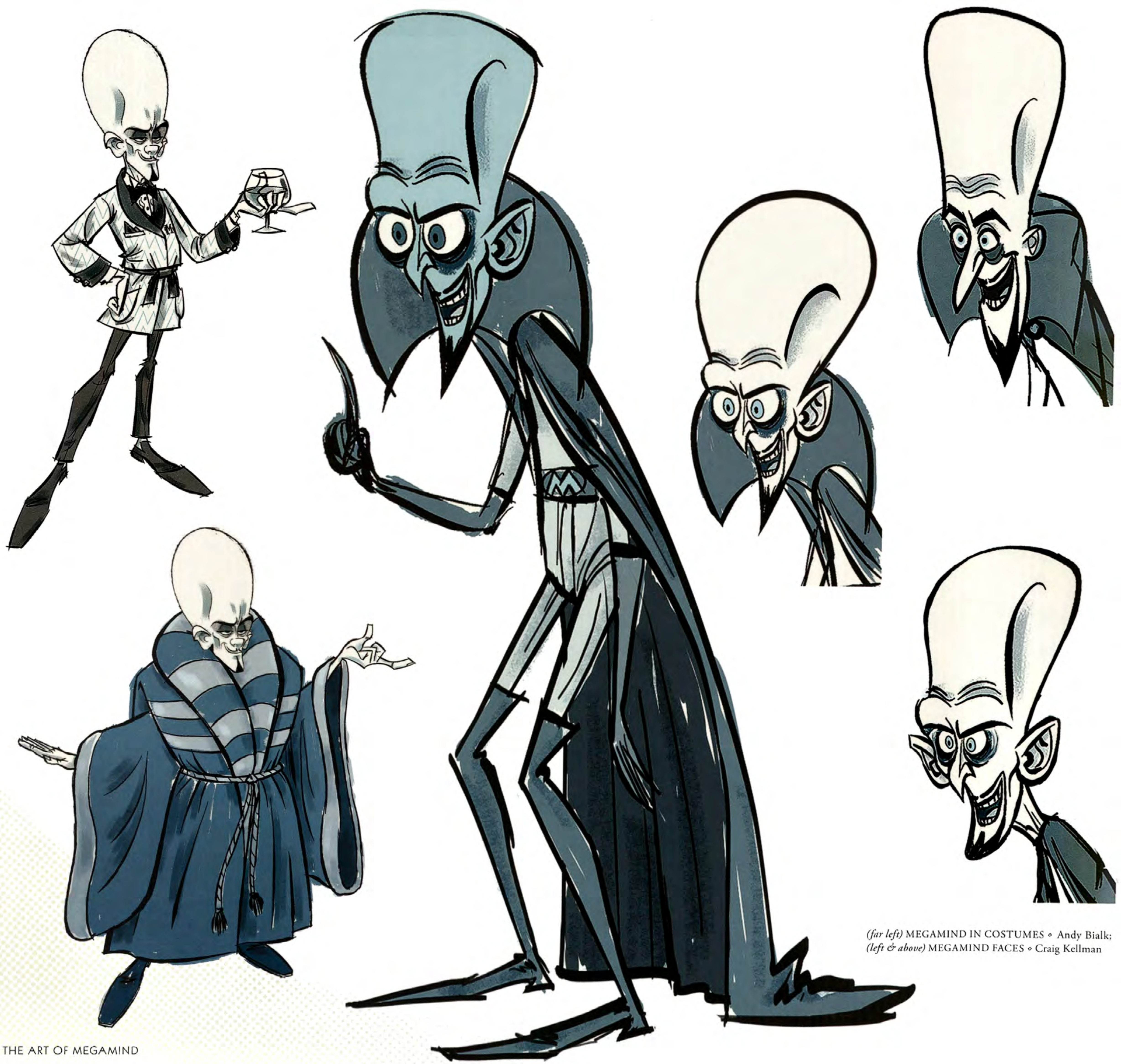
(left) MEGAMIND SKETCH ◦ Tony Siruno; *(above, left to right)* MEGAMIND WITH WINE ◦ Craig Kellman; MEGAMIND IN CAPE ◦ Andy Bialk; MEGAMIND IN SAFARI SUIT ◦ Andy Bialk





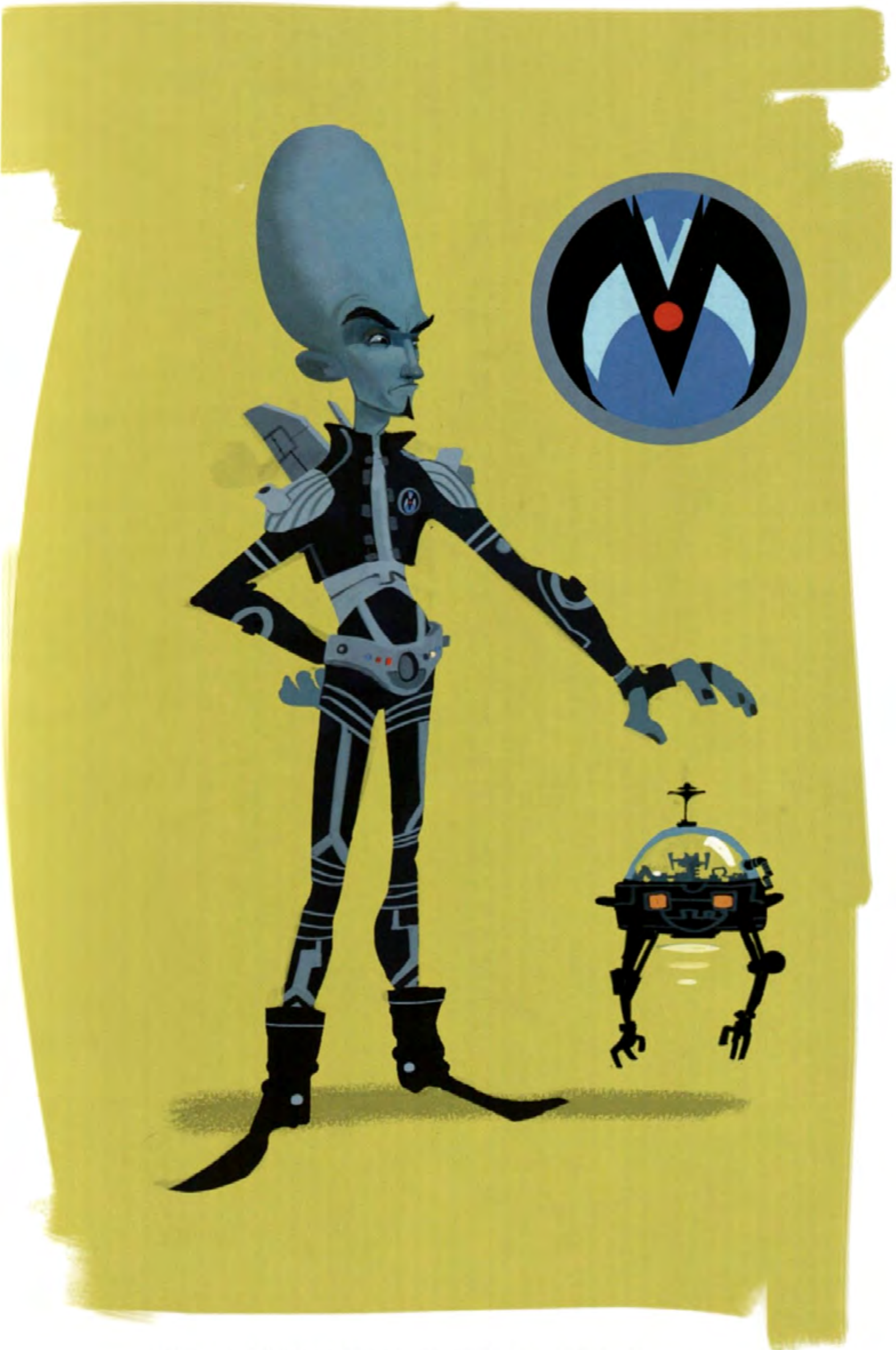


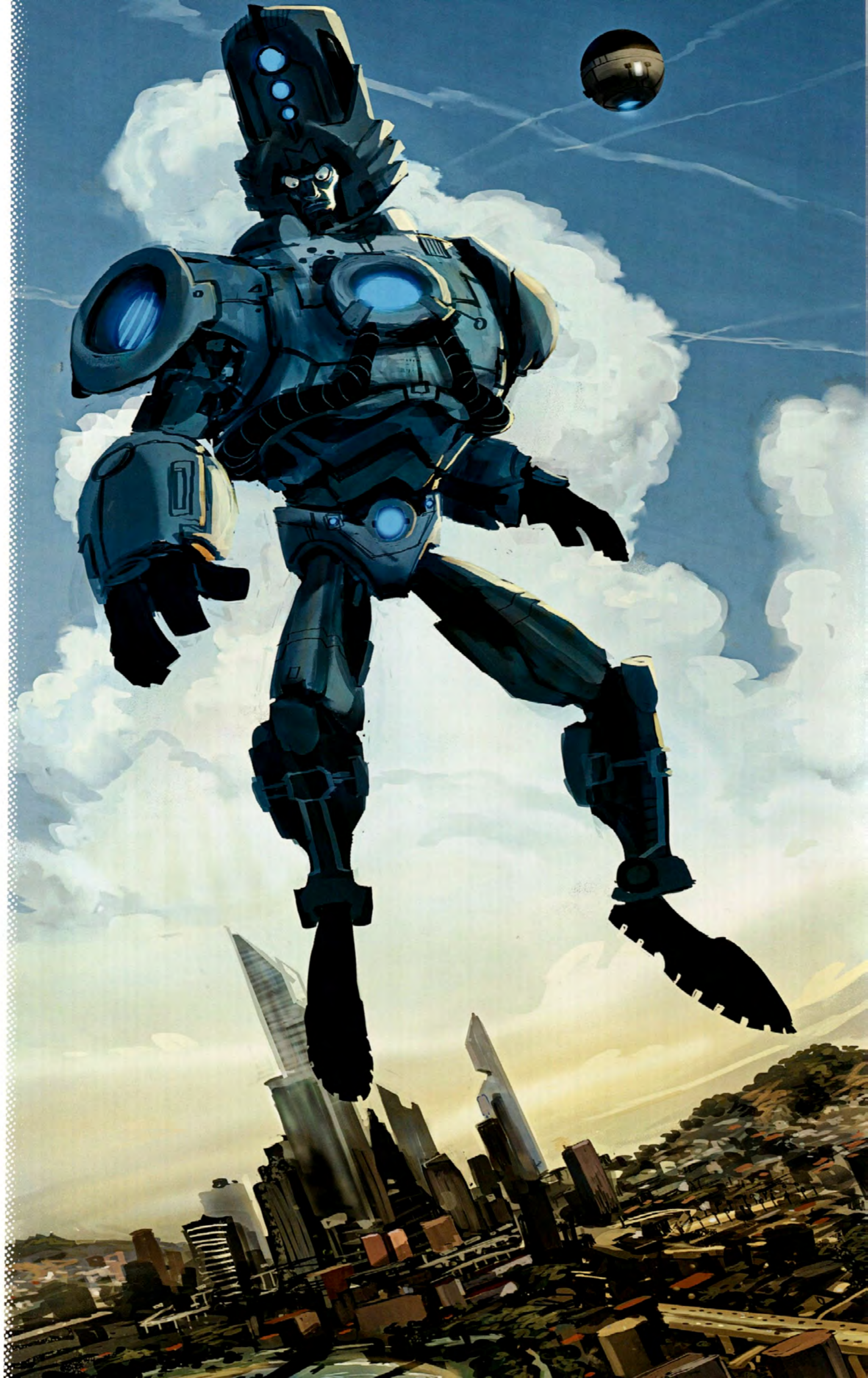
(above) MEGAMIND ◇ Andy Bialk; *(top right)* MEGAMIND COSTUMES ◇ Chin Ko; *(right)* MEGAMIND SKETCHES ◇ Tony Siruno



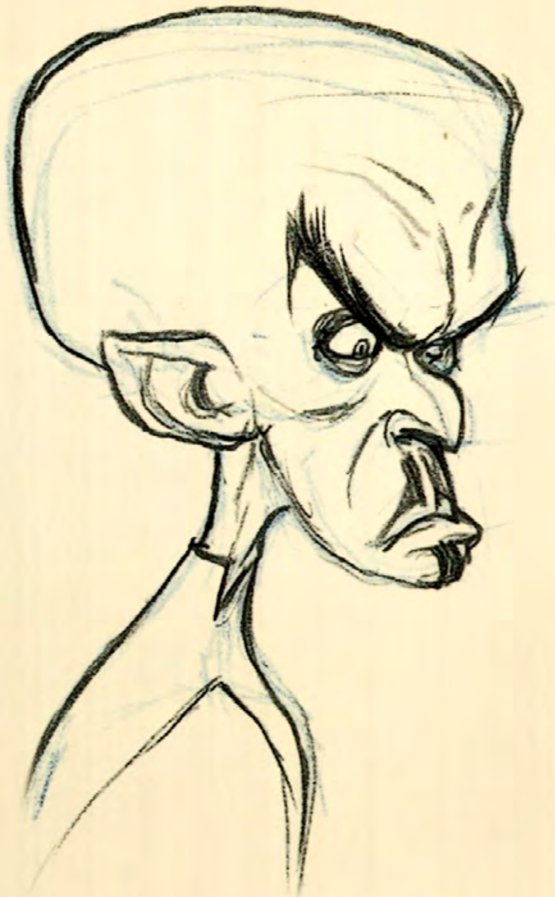
(far left) MEGAMIND IN COSTUMES ◦ Andy Bialk;
(left & above) MEGAMIND FACES ◦ Craig Kellman

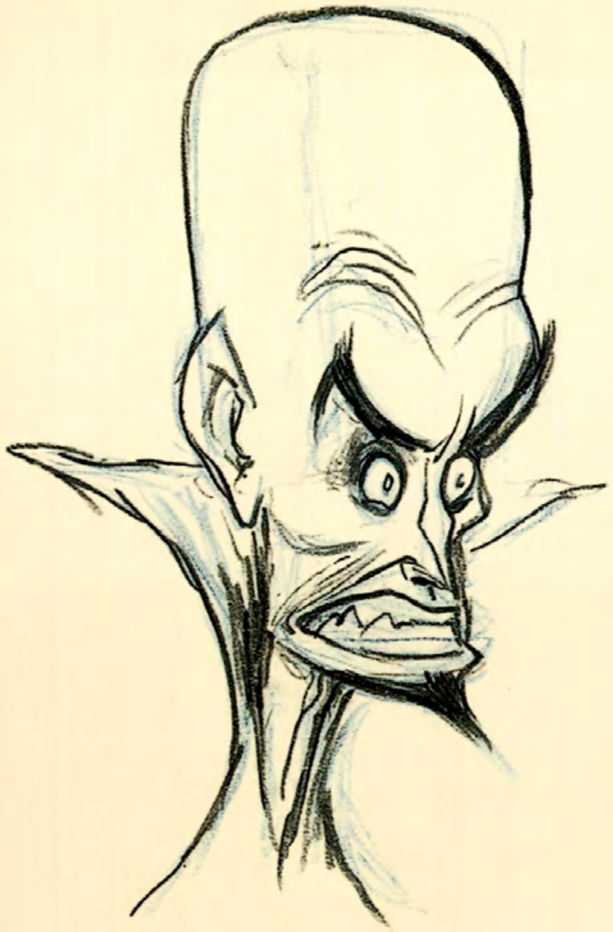
> **"The big idea for me in this movie was to stage a battle between Elvis and Alice Cooper: to have their stylizations reflect their warring rock star statuses."**
>
> — TOM MCGRATH, DIRECTOR

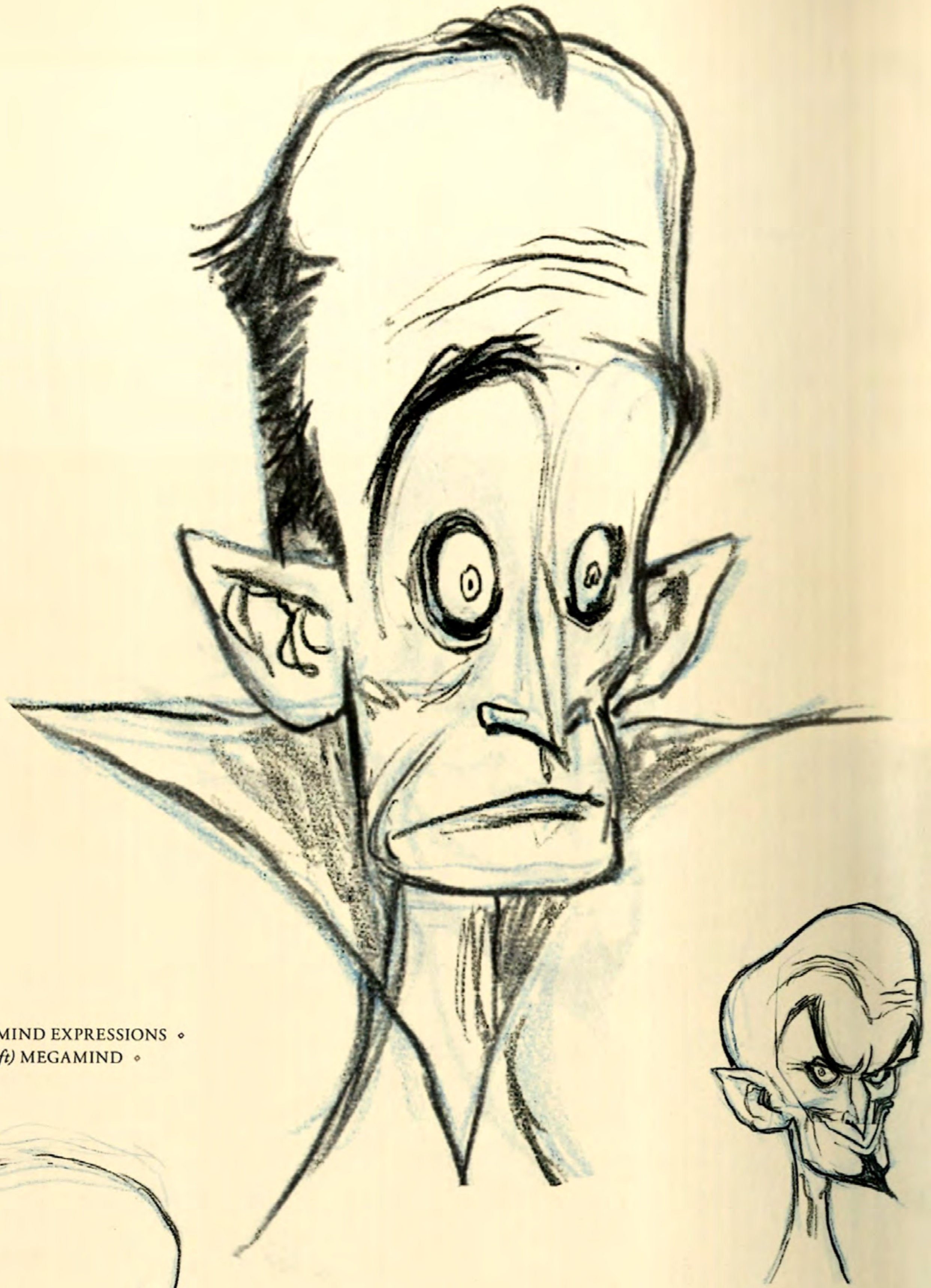


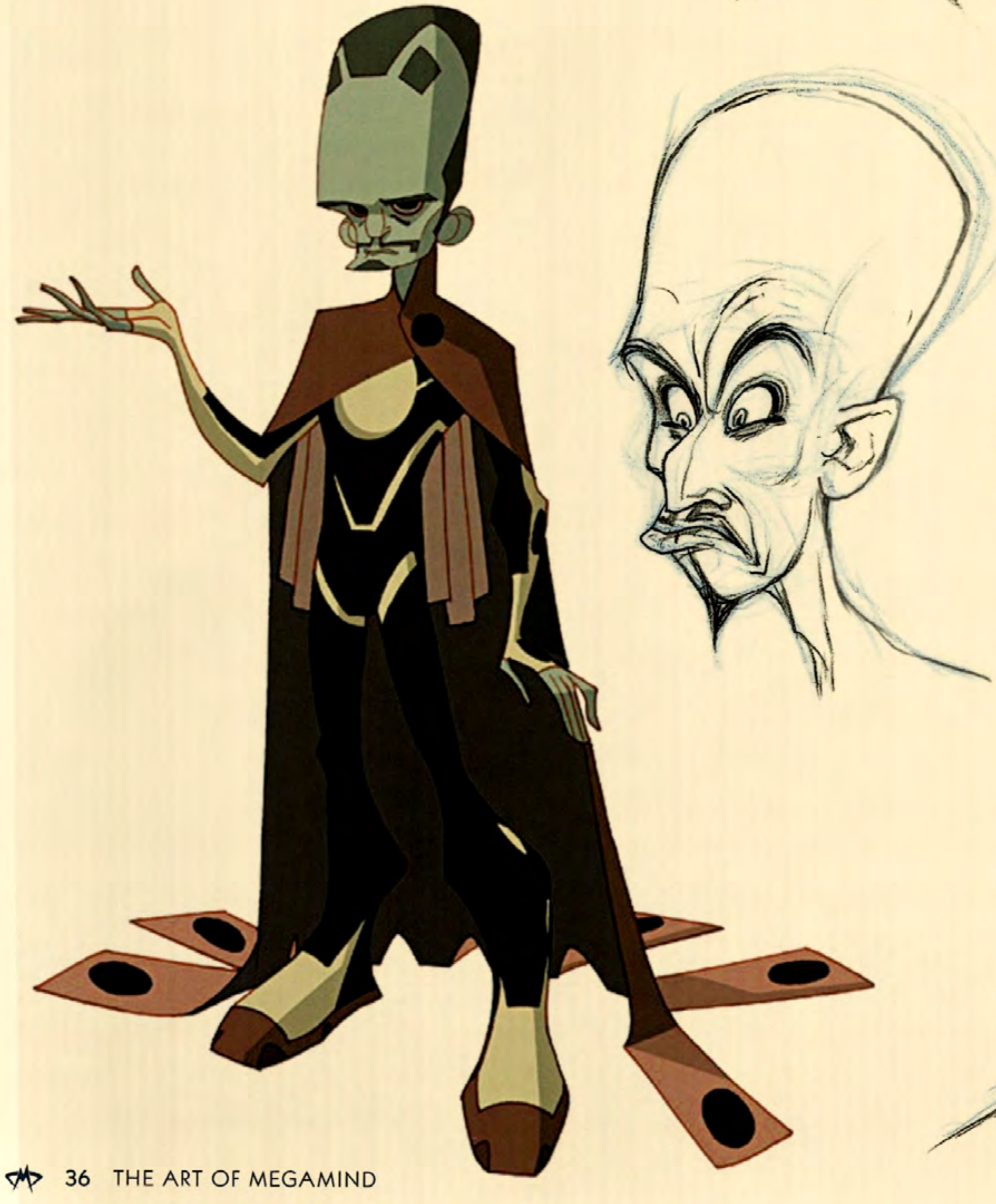


(above & right) MEGAMIND IN EXO SUIT ◦ Kory Heinzen

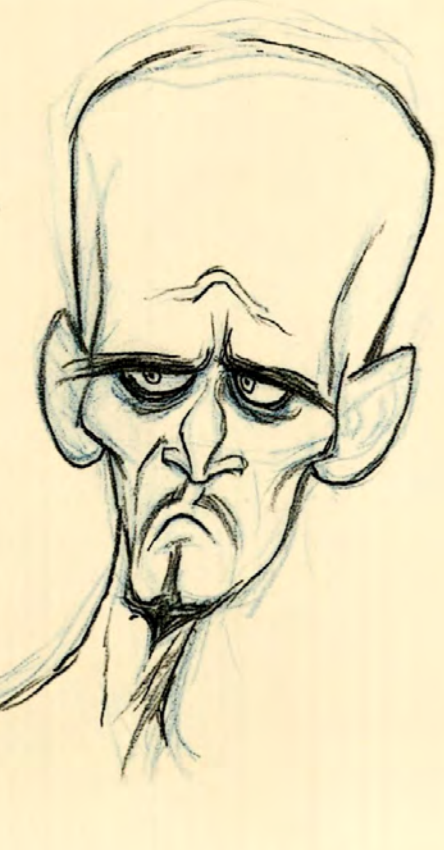




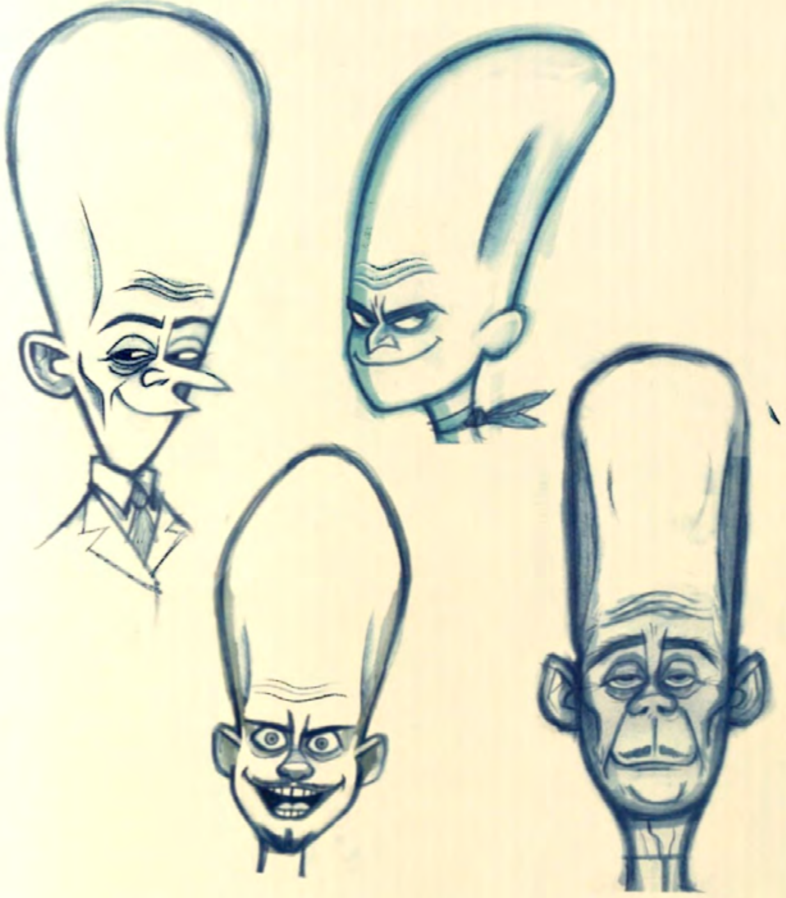


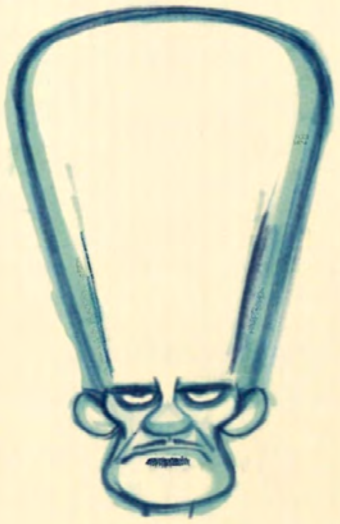


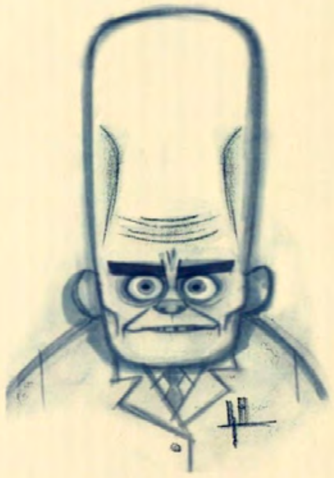
(this page) MEGAMIND EXPRESSIONS ◦ Tim Lamb; *(far left)* MEGAMIND ◦ Sean Galloway

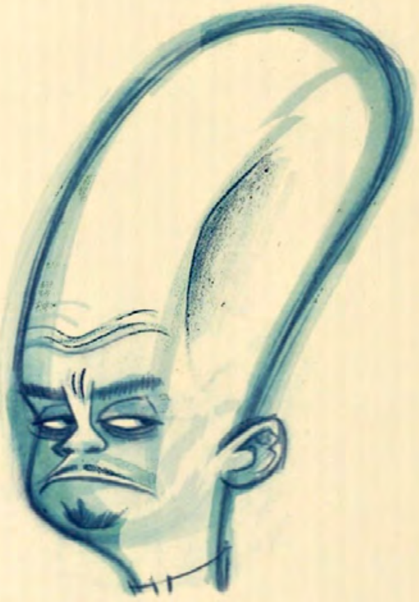


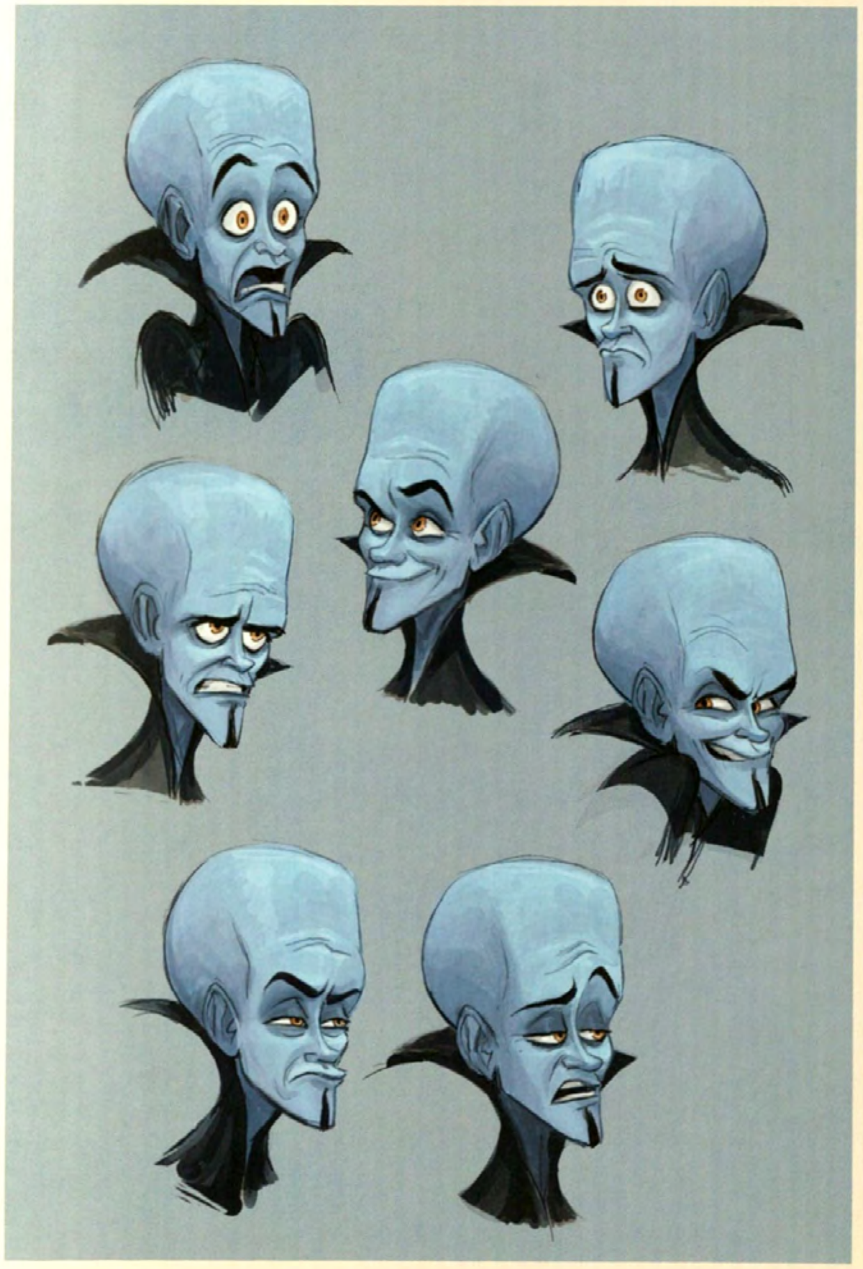
"Let's say I was bald and had a complexion of a popular primary color? As a random, nonspecific example. Would you still enjoy my company?"
—A DISGUISED MEGAMIND (TO ROXANNE)

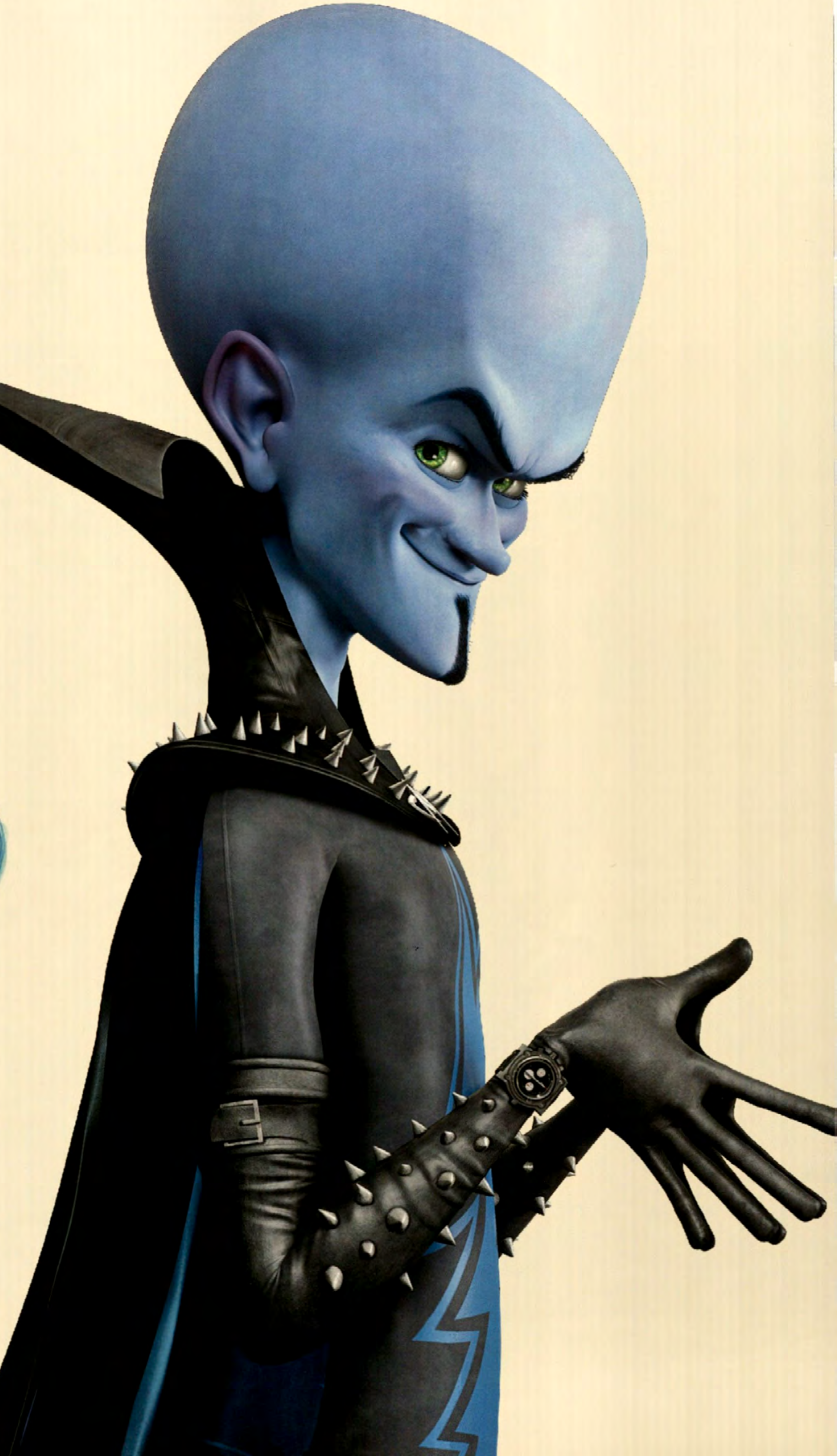




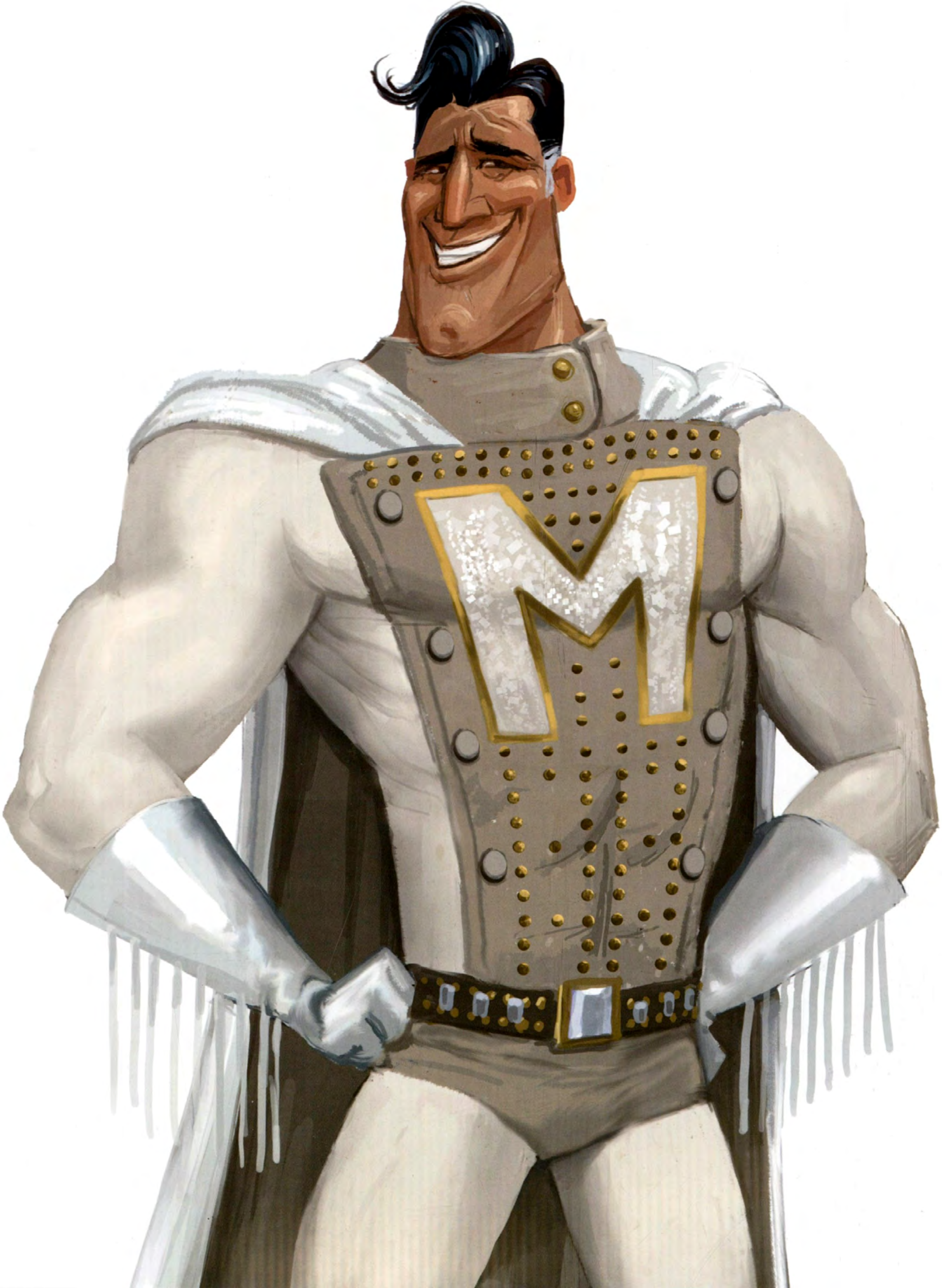


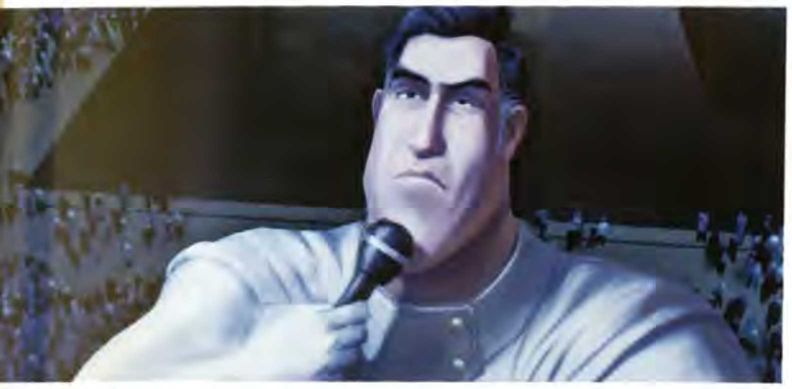


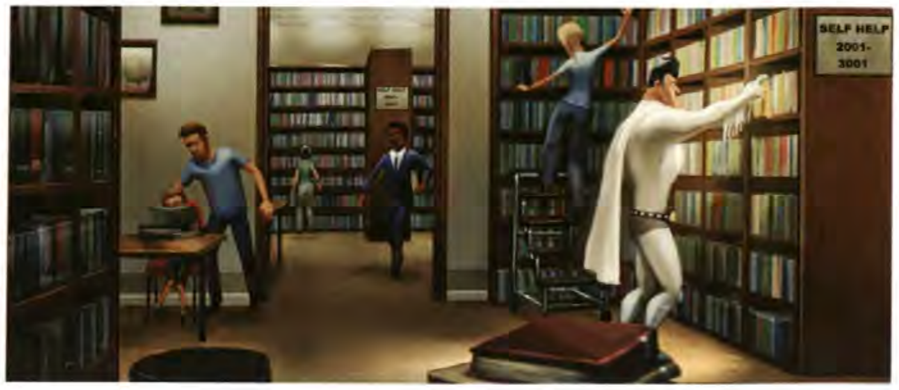


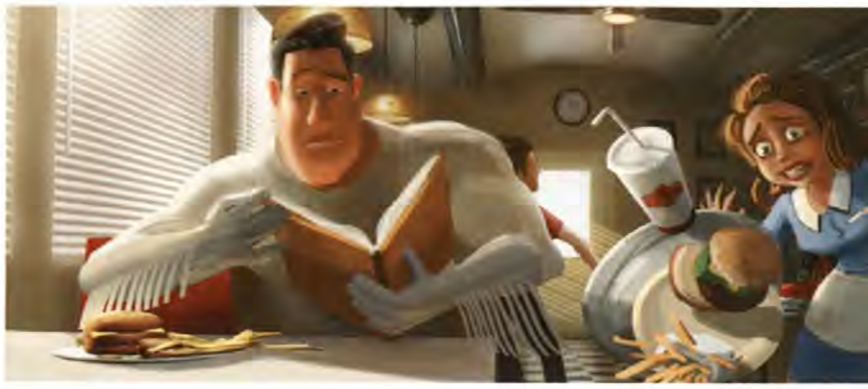


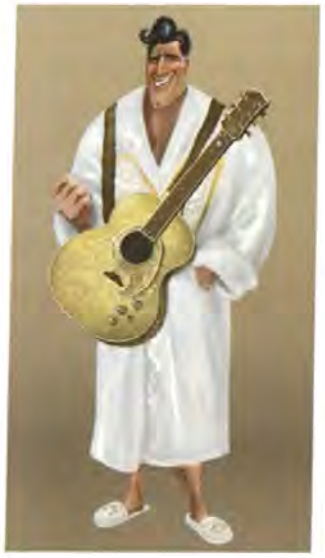
(left) MEGAMIND EXPRESSIONS ◇ Tim Lamb; *(above)* MEGAMIND SKETCHES ◇ Andy Bialk; *(right)* CG RENDER ◇ DreamWorks Animation











METRO MAN

Surrounded by what Megamind calls "his gigantic army of soft-headed groupies, easily fascinated by God-like power," Metro Man is the protector of Metro City. This high-flying hero is, says Roxanne on camera, "always watching us with his super vision, saving us with his super strength, and caring for us with his super heart."

The filmmakers chime in: "A garish buffoon," says production designer David James, with "a fake tan," adds art director Tim Lamb. "Elvis on steroids," says head of story Catherine Rader. "Ultimately, a misguided hero," producer Denise Cascino states diplomatically.

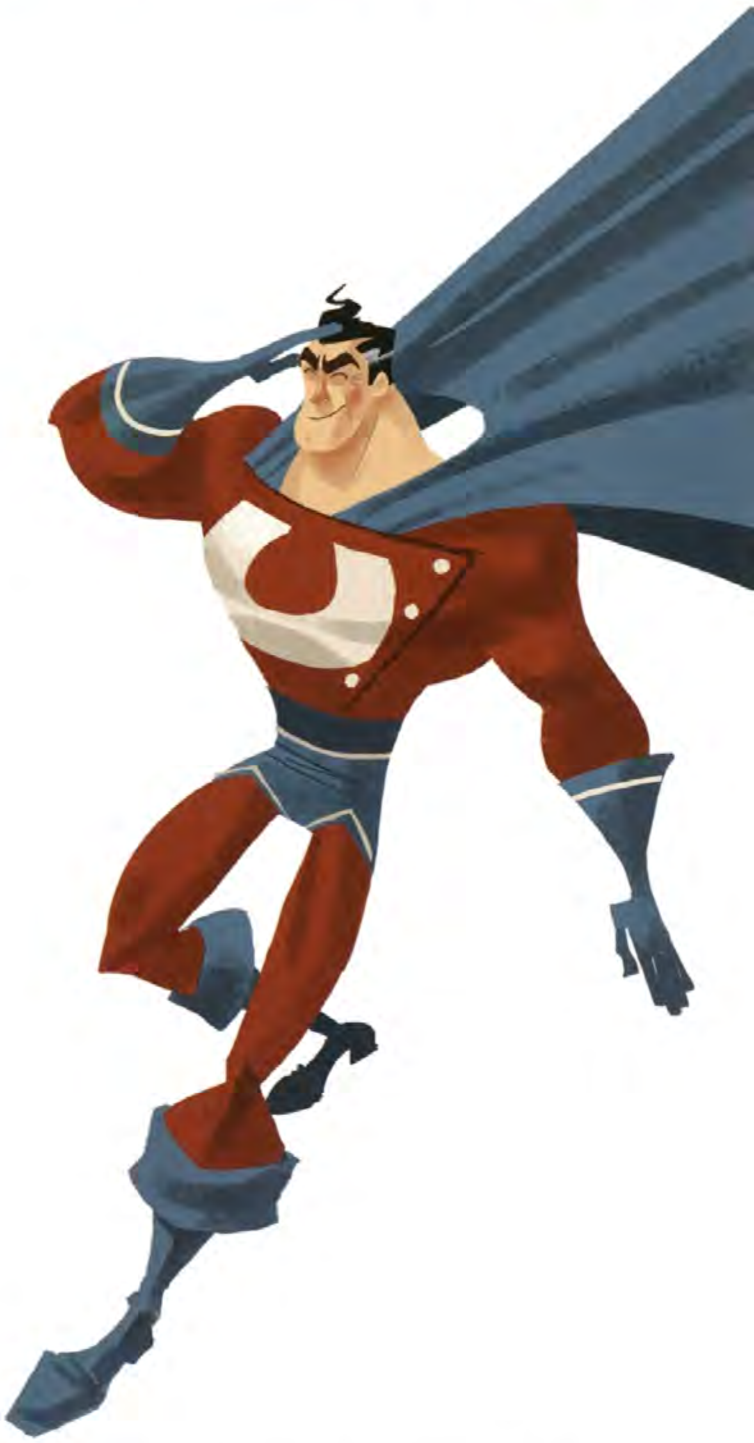
"When we first started animating Metro Man, we were playing up the smarmy, used-car salesman attitude," says head of character animation Jason Schleifer. "However, we found that he wasn't very compelling until we really focused on the honesty of this difficult situation he is in."

To take a step back, it's apparent that Metro Man hits the one obstacle that doesn't yield to him during the course of our story: a mid-life crisis. Fouling Megamind's schemes seems to have given him some grey hairs. Saving the city is just one more workday for him; one less chance to think about his choices in life.

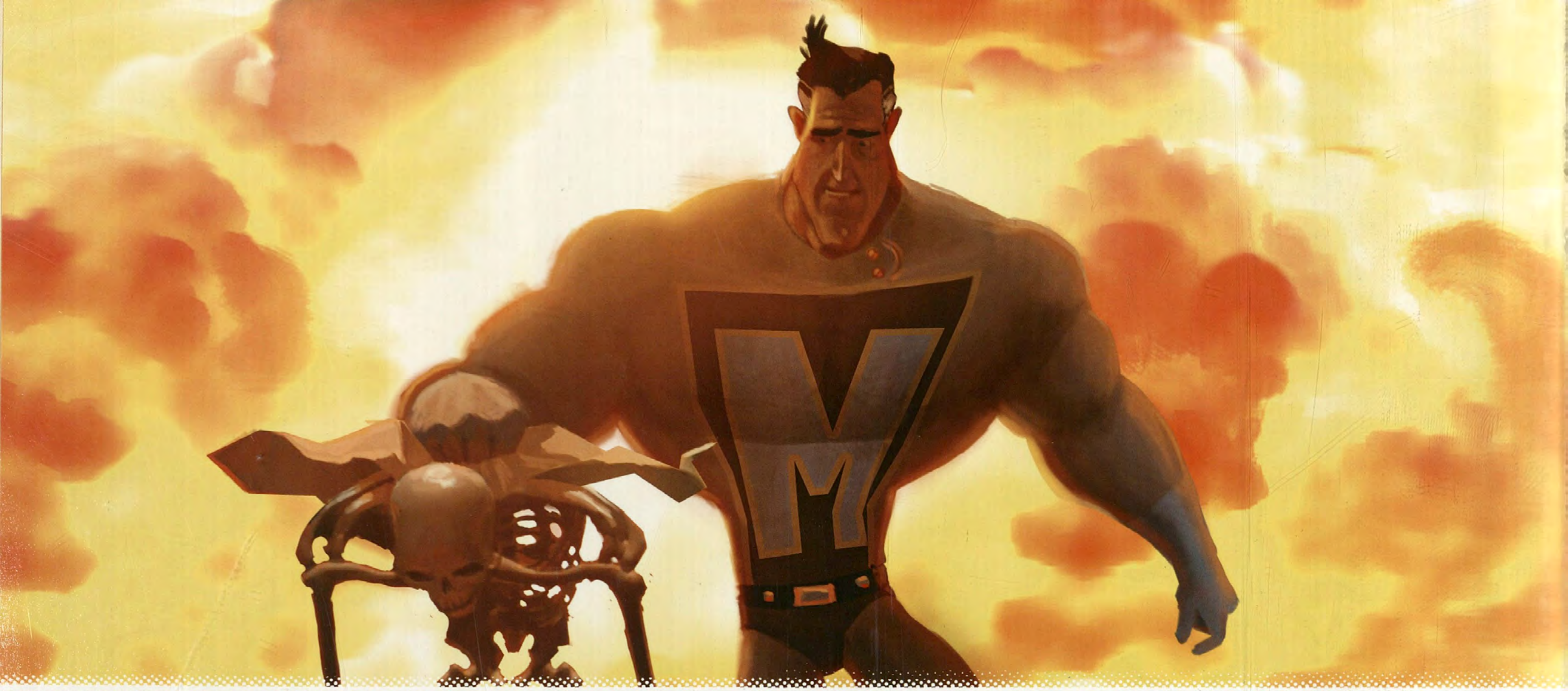
Still, he was a grade grubber in childhood, and in adulthood, he's a gladhander. In one telling version of Metro Man by Lamb, the superhero flashes a who's-your-daddy smirk and a perfectly coifed pompadour (which could be, as one Lamb drawing suggests, a secret super toupee). Even so, the filmmakers disavow the word *metrosexual* as the source for Metro Man's name and look, despite the extreme attention to wardrobe: the white buckskin fringe, his supple gauntlets, and more gold buttons than you'll find on a Viennese bellboy's uniform.

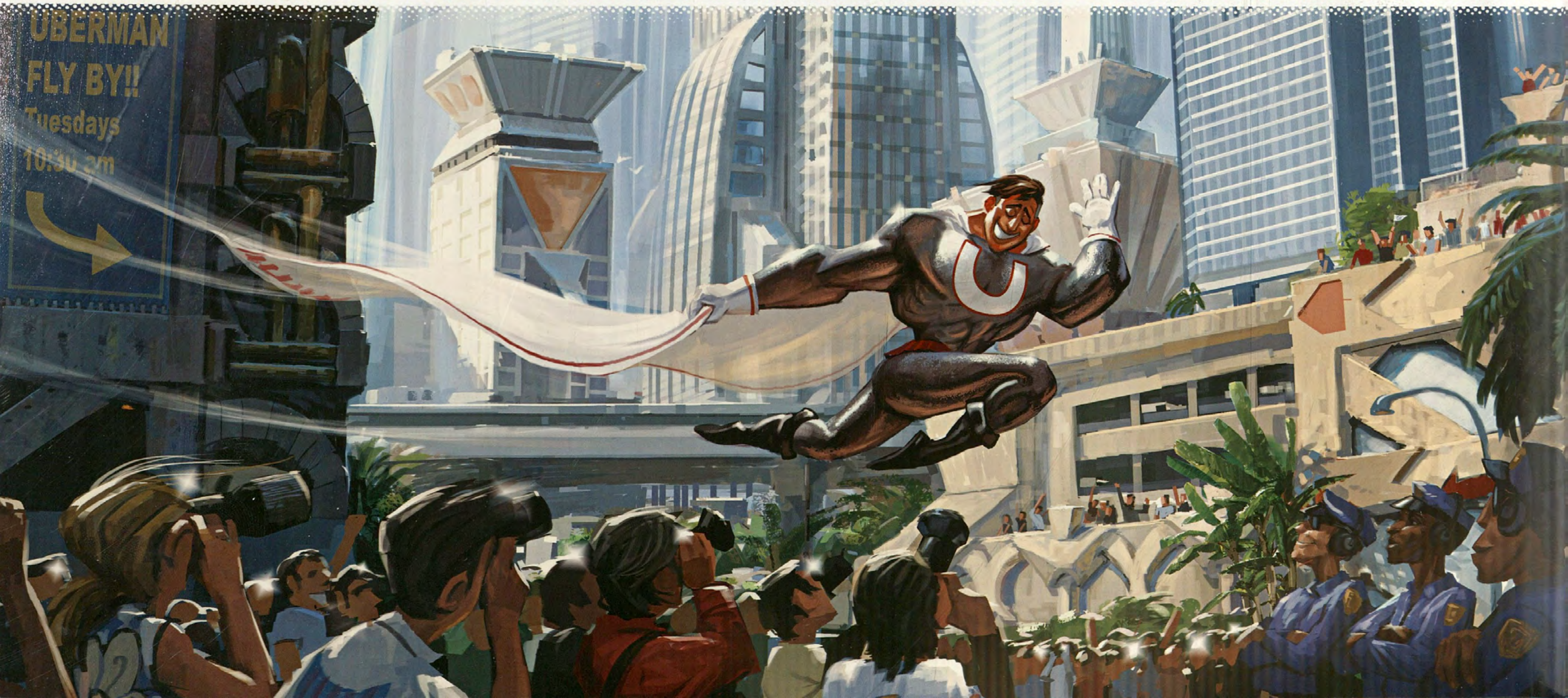
Metro Man is the character whose look and personality changed the least during development. The character design was always rooted in the classic superhero archetype that emerged during the Great Depression of the 1930s—a manifestation of a popular longing for power during an age of general impotence. The comic book drawing conventions that give rise to these figures are well-established twentieth-century custom: a massive triangle of a chest balanced on a tiny waist. And David James notes a standard artistic distortion: just as it is common for a supervillain to have a short body and an oversized head, your standard comic book superhero is about eight to ten heads high. In exaggerated form here, Metro Man is all colossal body topped with a thimble-sized head.

James adds, "Not to intellectualize it too much, but the big, brawny guy who everybody loves in reality may not be that great of a guy."



(opposite) METRO MAN ◦ Tim Lamb; *(top panel, left to right)* METRO MAN LOOKS UP ◦ Erwin Madrid; METRO MAN AT THE LIBRARY ◦ Travis Koller; METRO MAN IN DINER ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(left)* METRO MAN WITH GUITAR ◦ Chin Ko; *(above)* METRO MAN SALUTE ◦ Shane Prigmore

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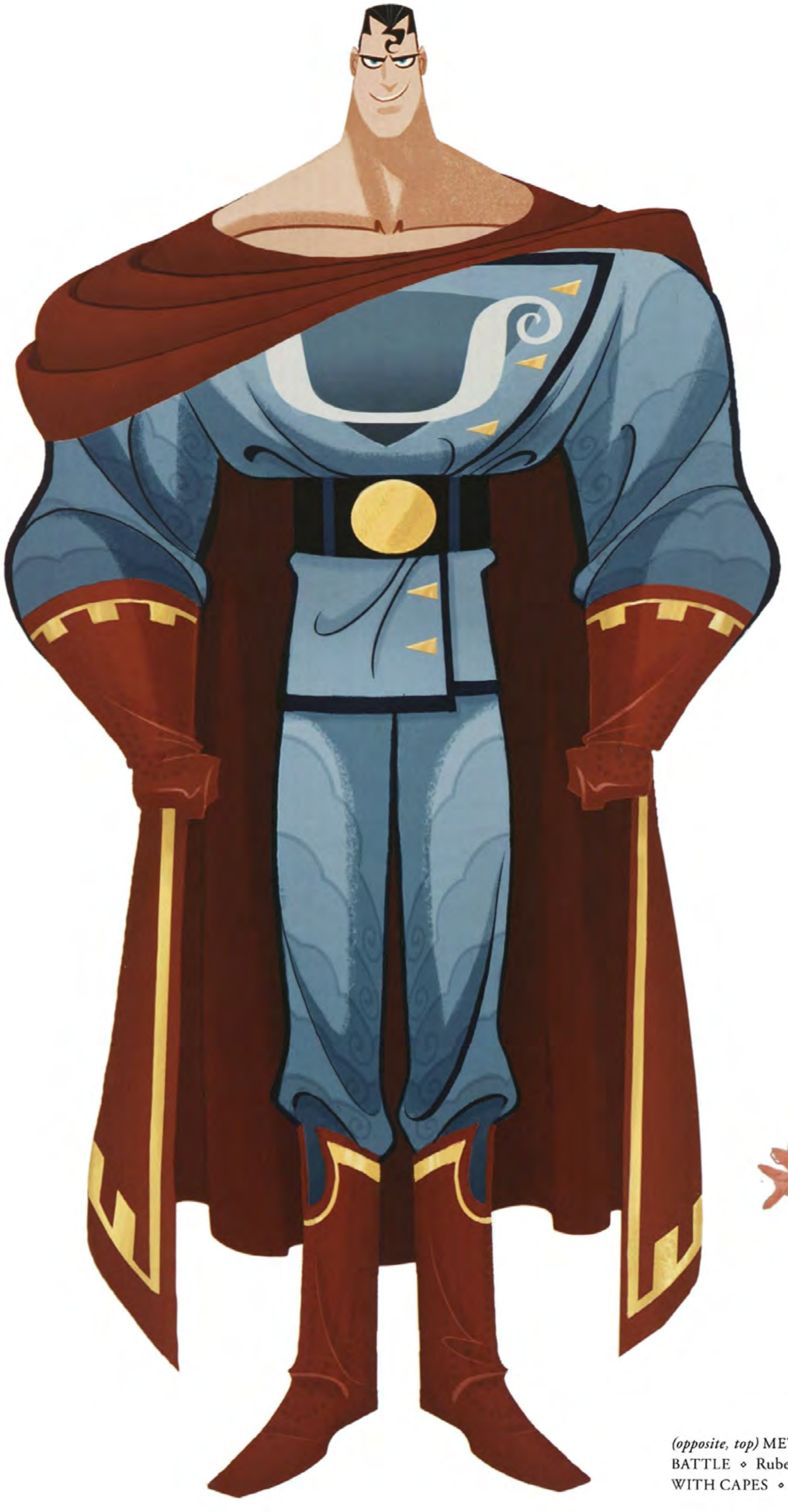
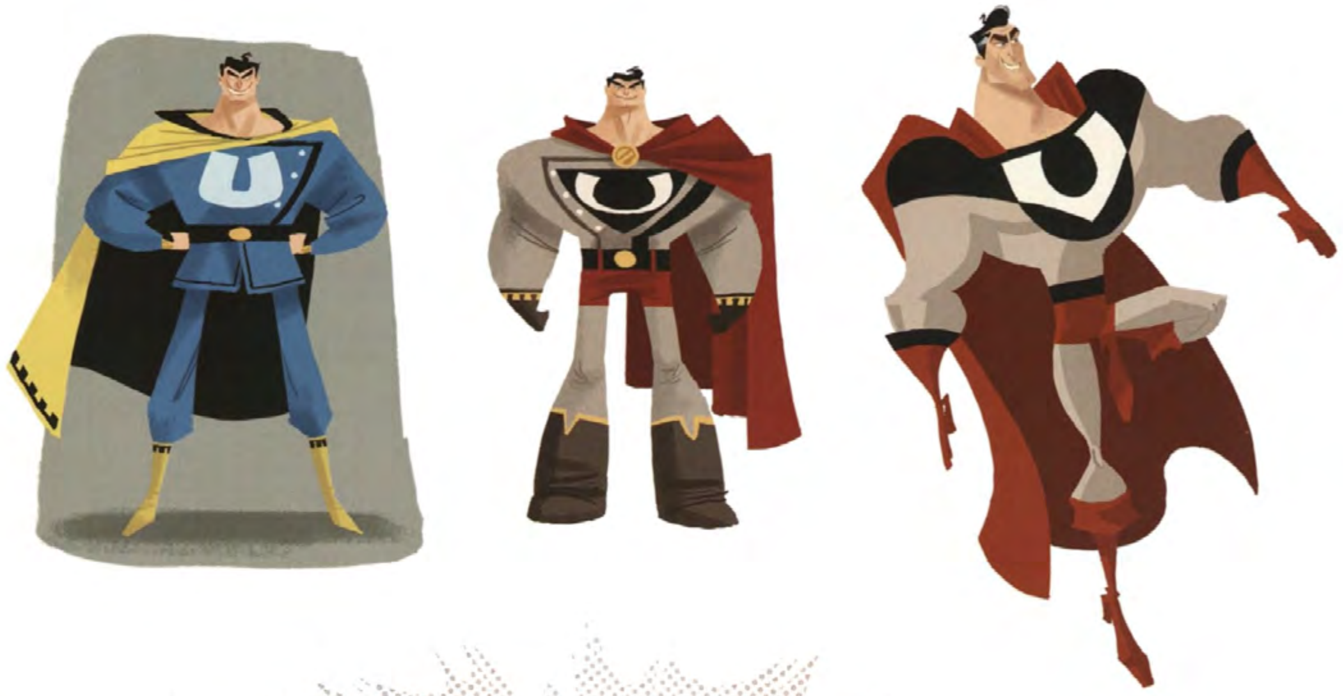
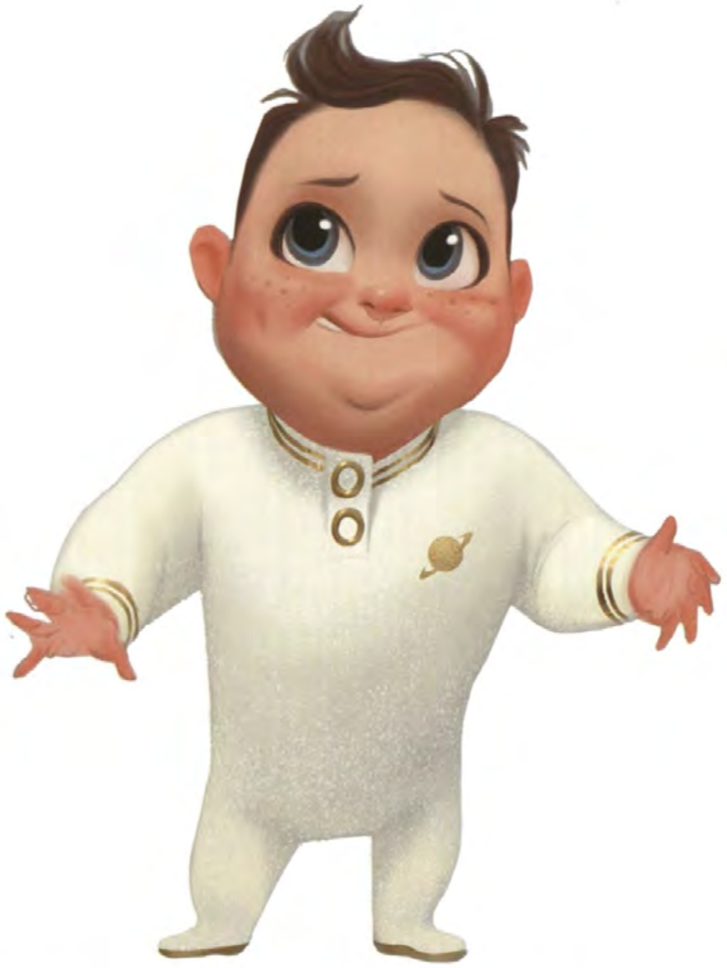
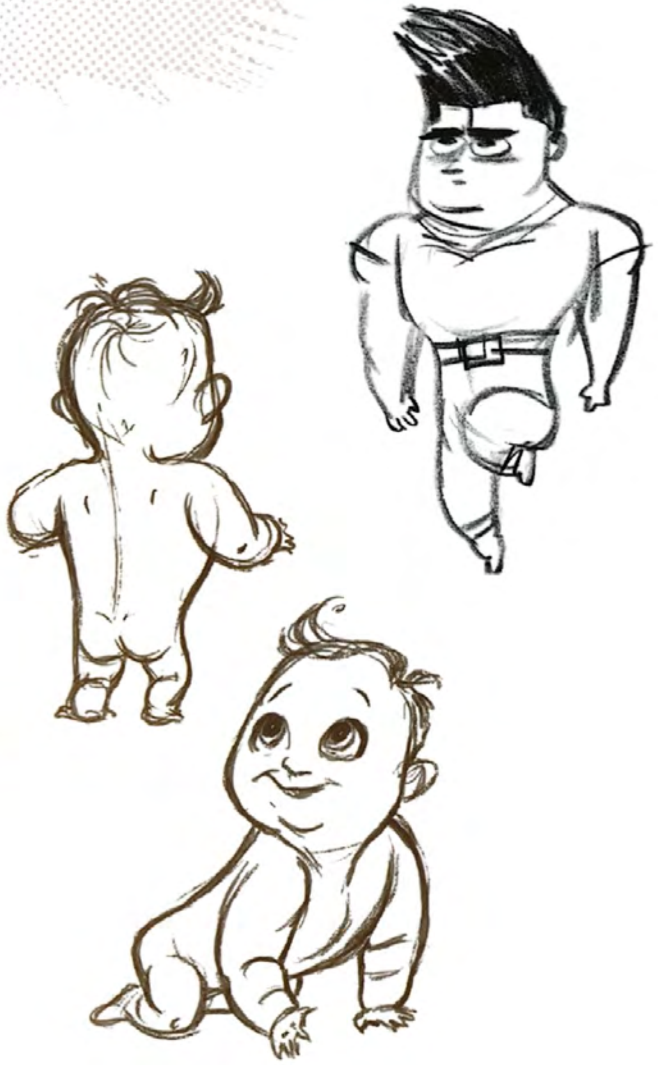


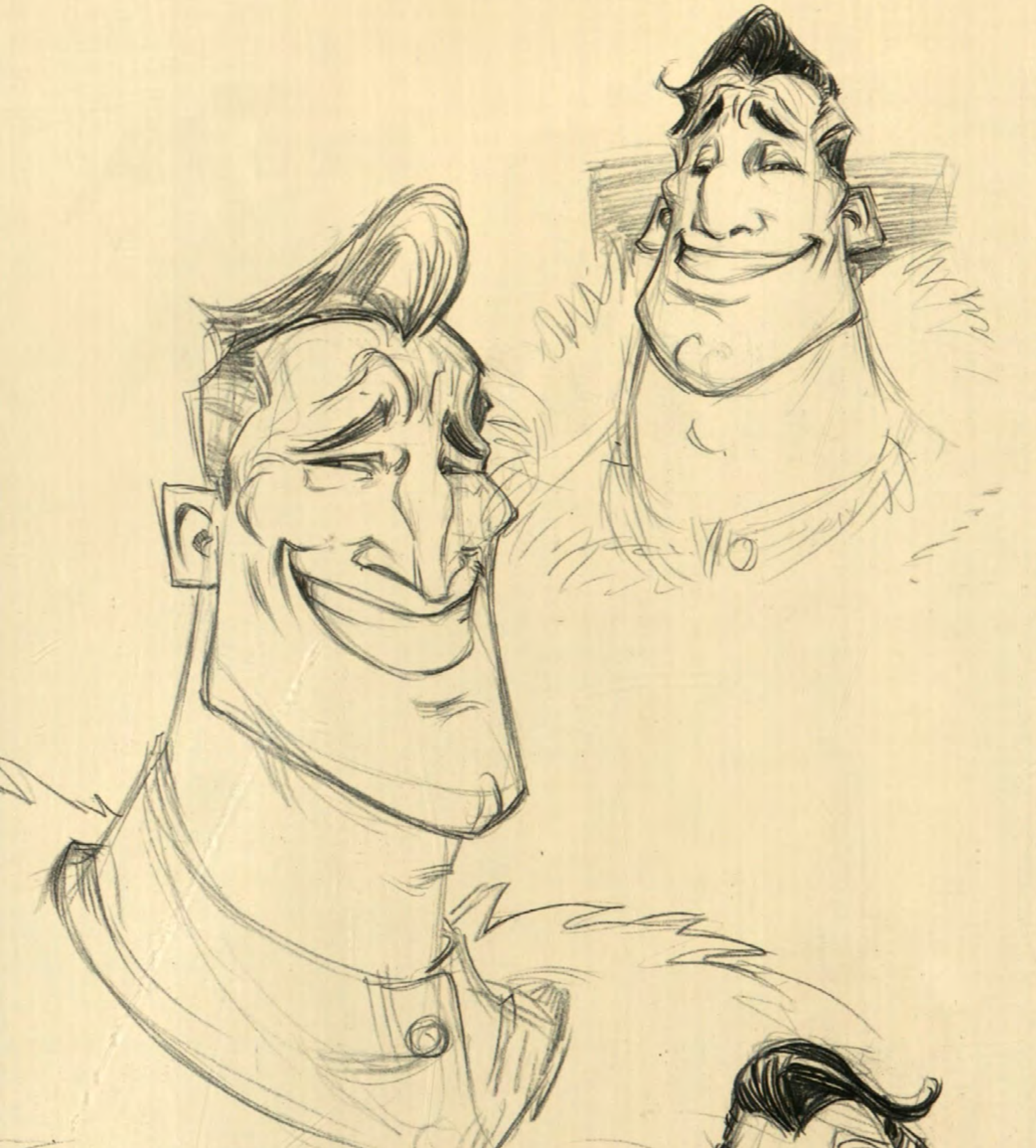


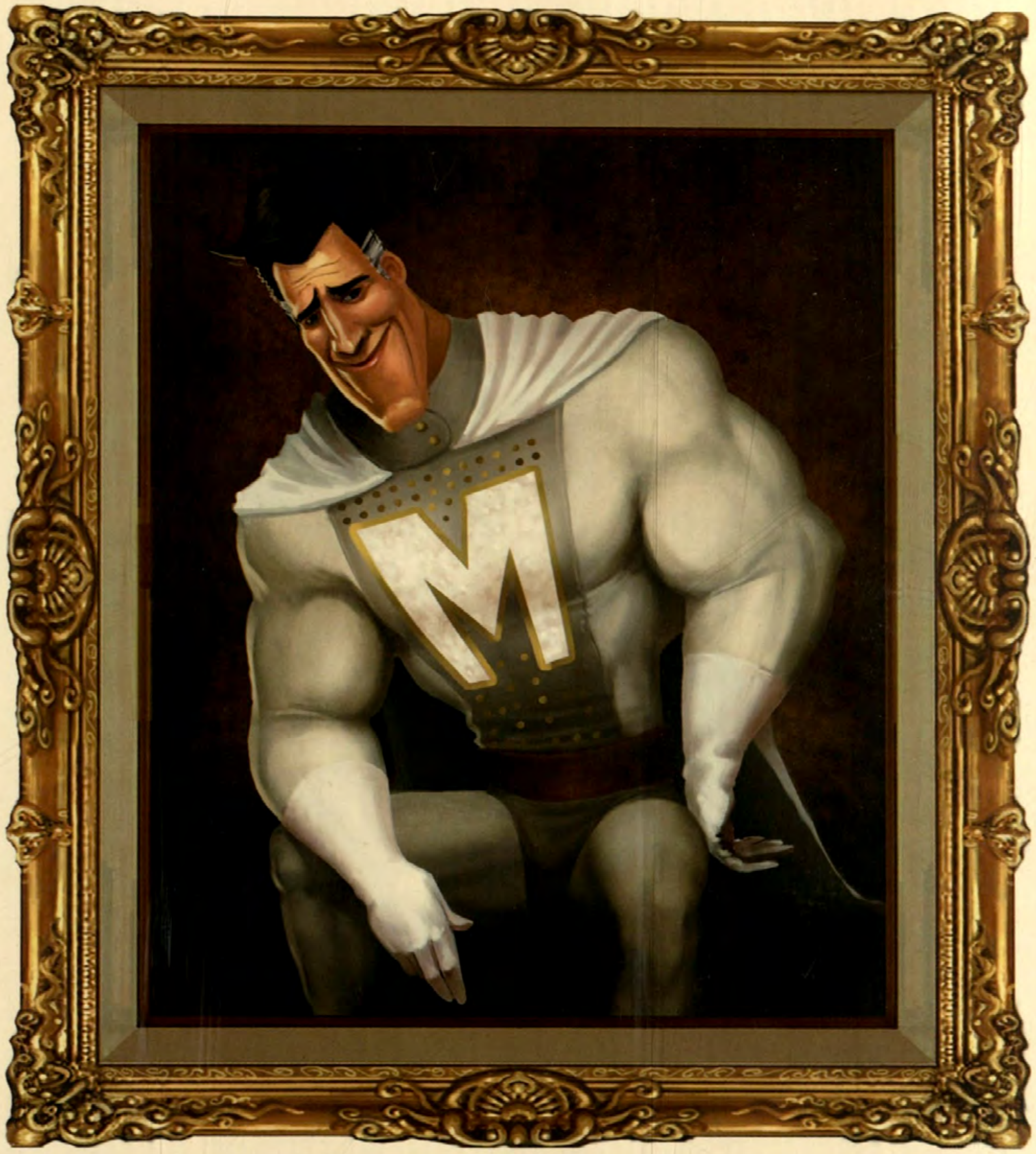
> **"He's a little like that guy in high school, the captain of the football team. You're *supposed* to like him."**
>
> —DAVID JAMES, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

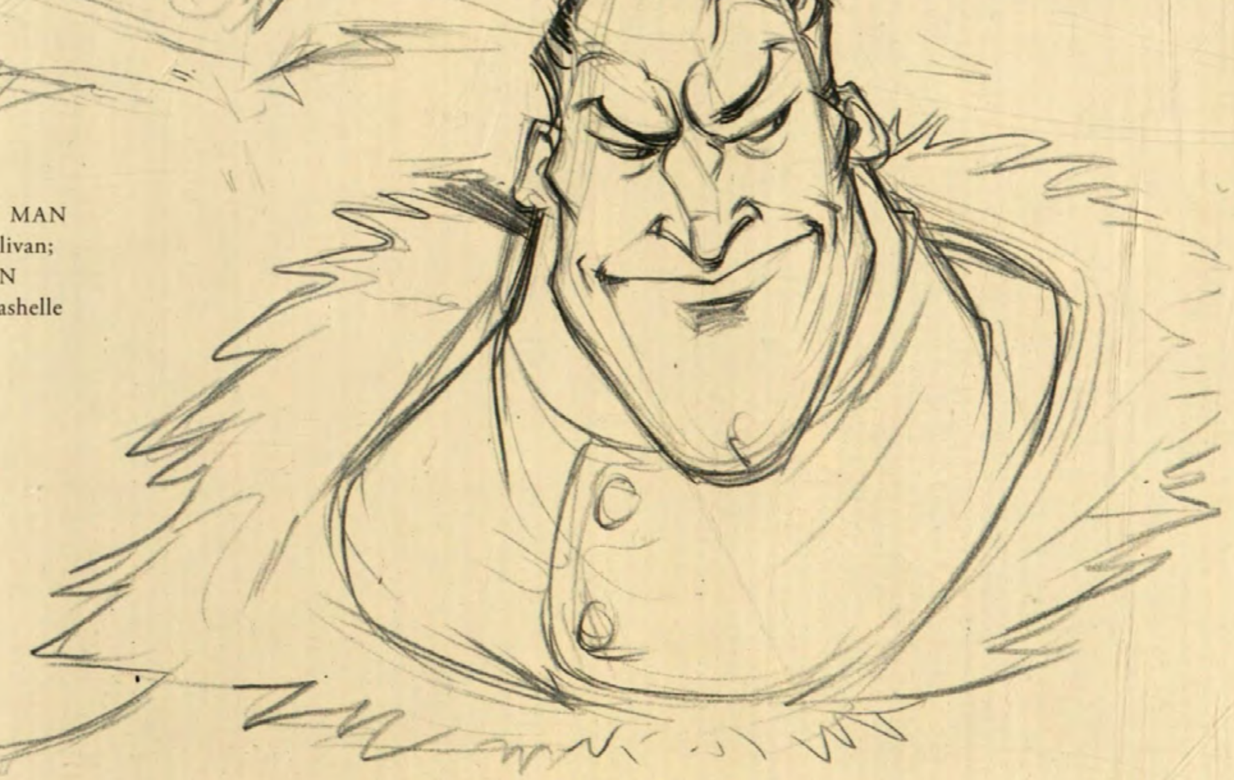




(opposite, top) METRO MAN IS TOO COOL FOR EXPLOSIONS ◦ Bryan Lashelle; *(opposite, bottom)* OPENING BATTLE ◦ Ruben Hickman; *(left)* METRO MAN ◦ Tony Siruno & Sylvain Deboissy; *(top right)* METRO MAN WITH CAPES ◦ Shane Prigmore; *(above)* METRO KID ◦ Tom McGrath; *(right)* METRO BABY ◦ Tim Lamb



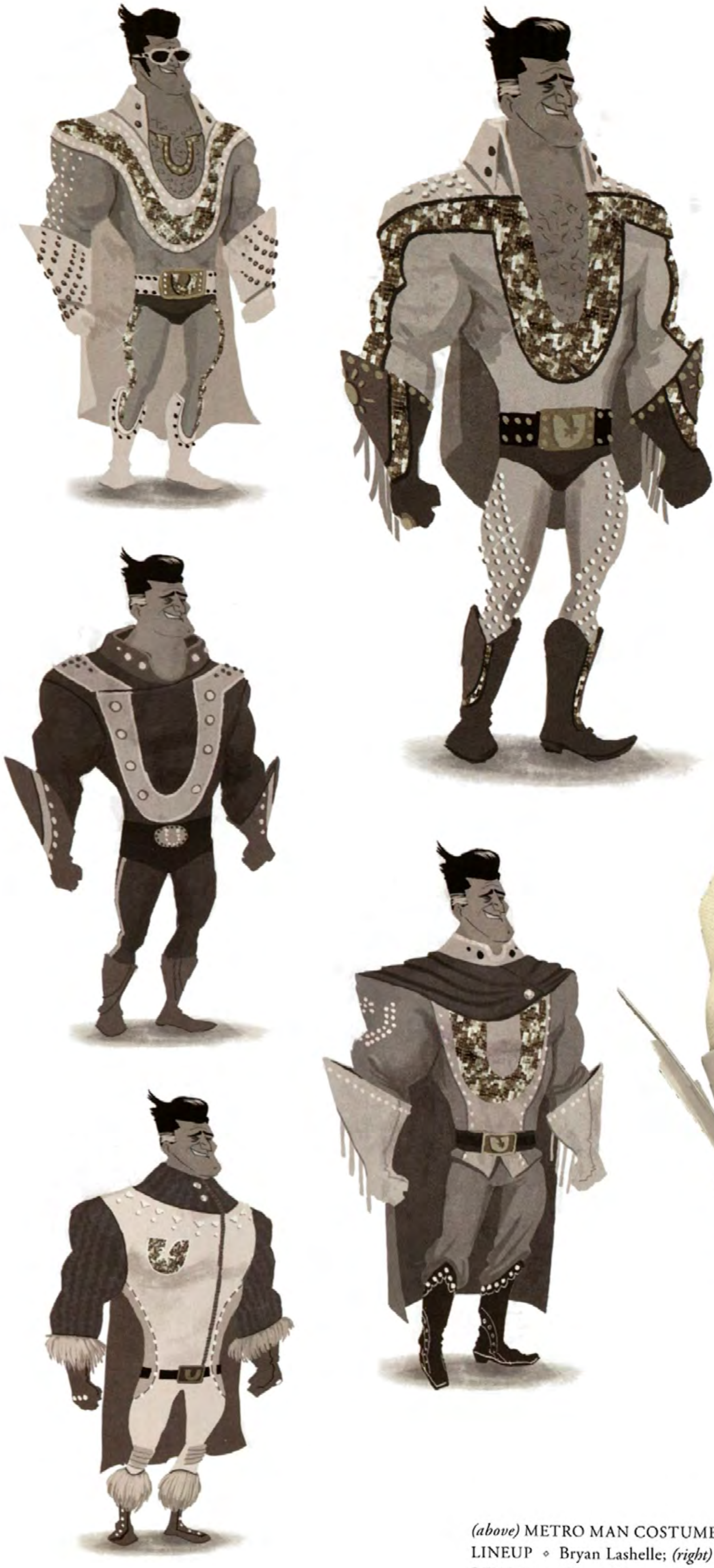


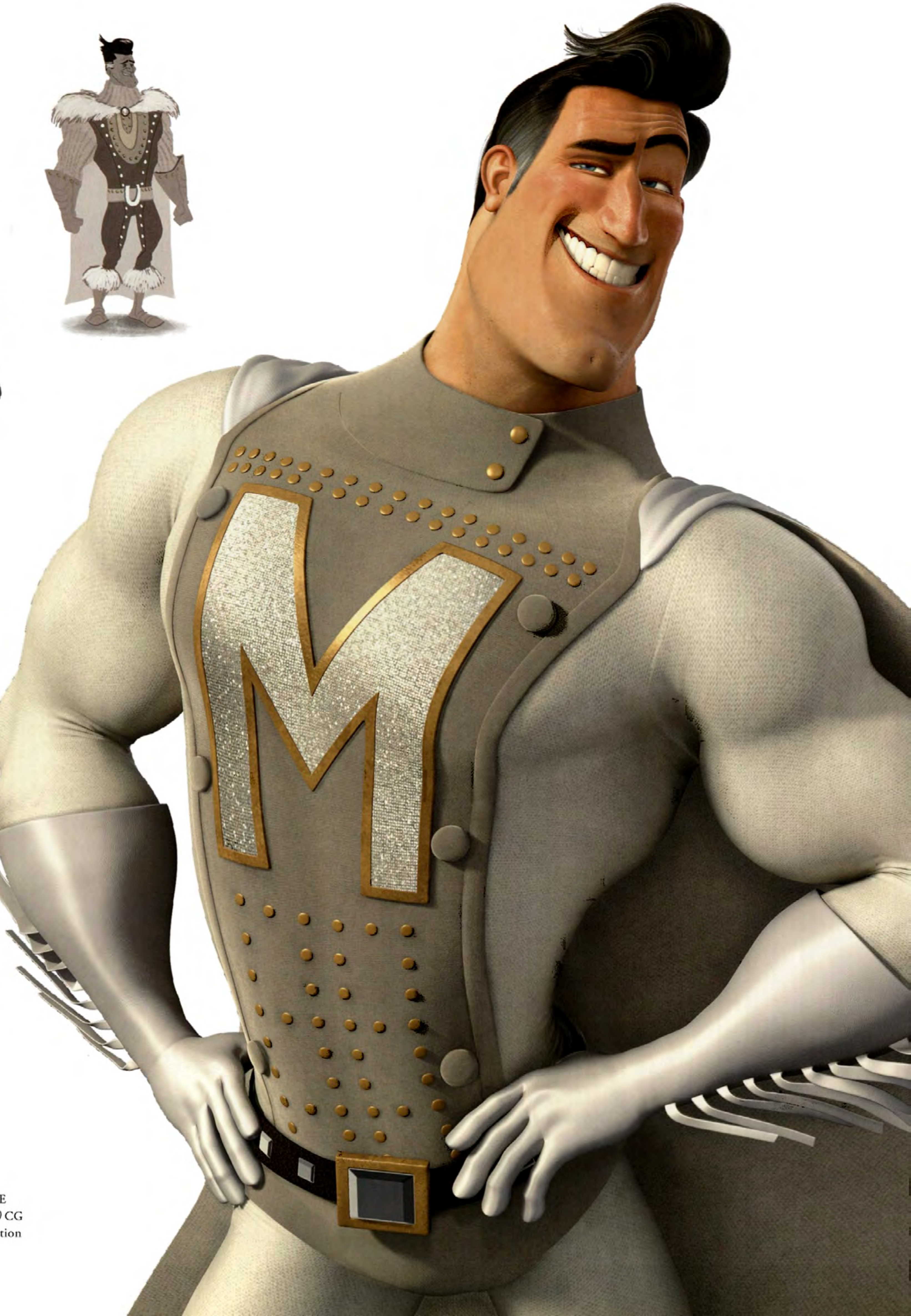


(above & right) METRO MAN SKETCHES ◦ Paul Sullivan; *(top right)* METRO MAN PORTRAIT ◦ Bryan Lashelle

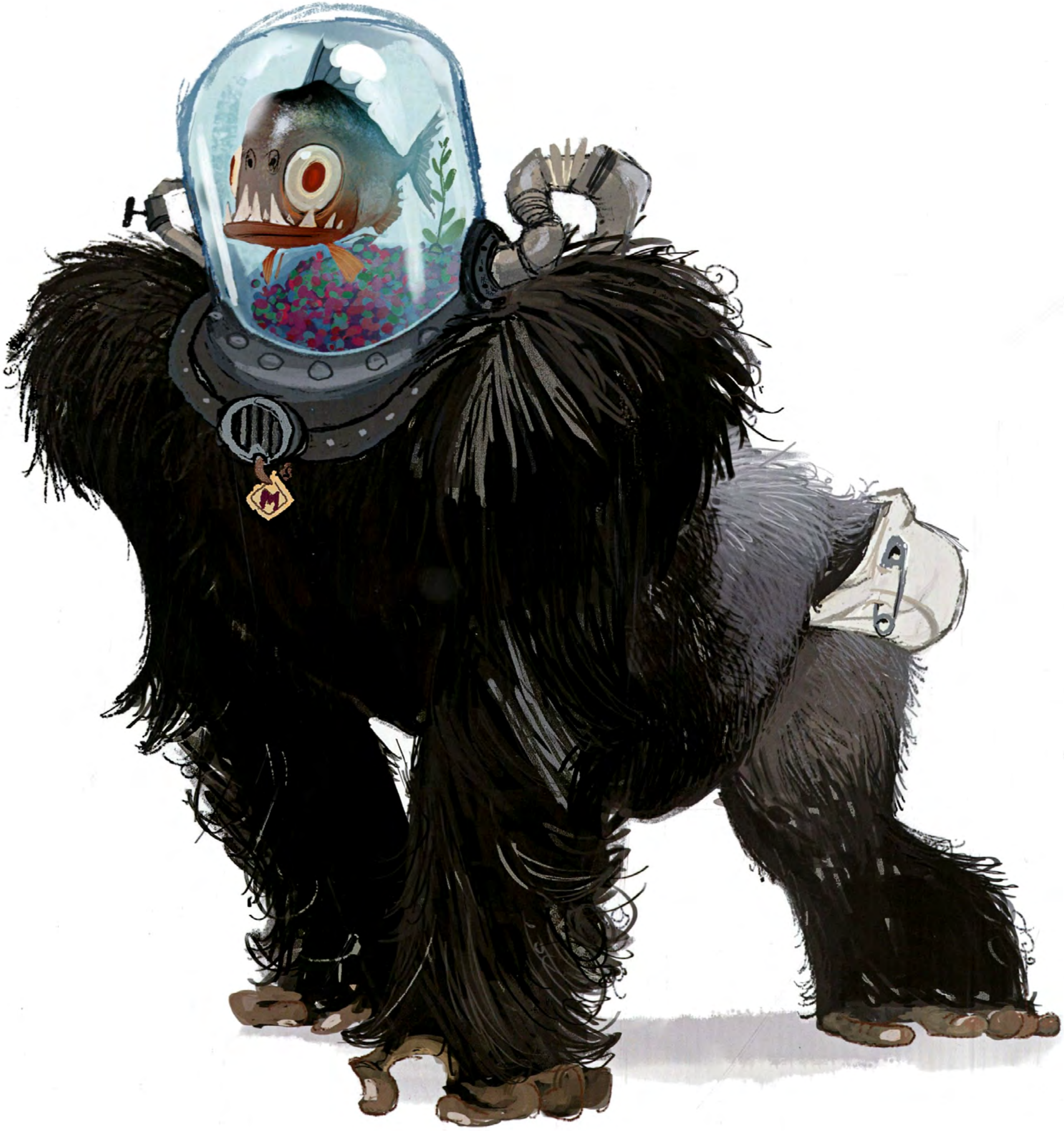
"Metro Man is sort of smarmy. Through arbitrary luck and natural abilities, his life has been effortless and easy, and everyone loves him."

—CATHERINE RADER, HEAD OF STORY





(above) METRO MAN COSTUME LINEUP ◦ Bryan Lashelle; *(right)* CG RENDER ◦ DreamWorks Animation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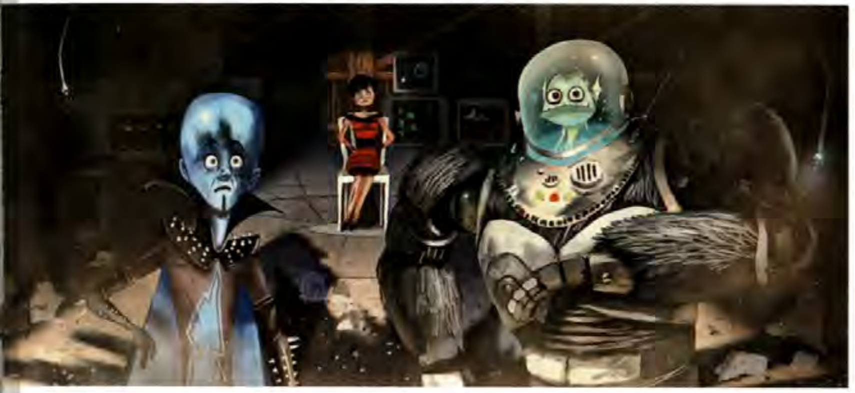
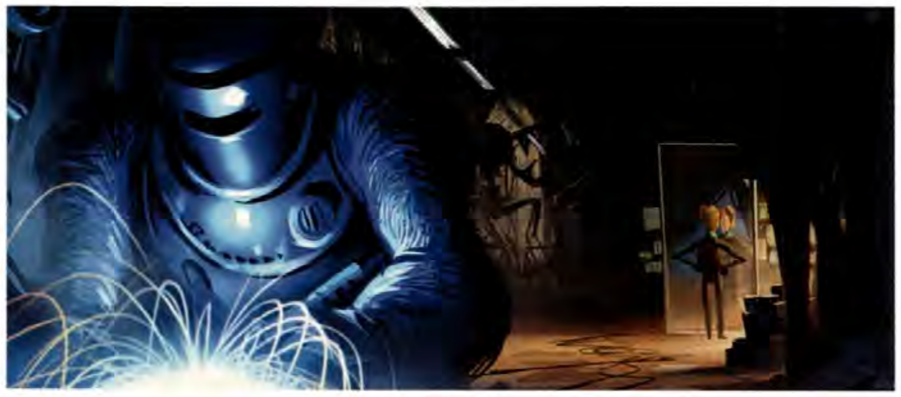
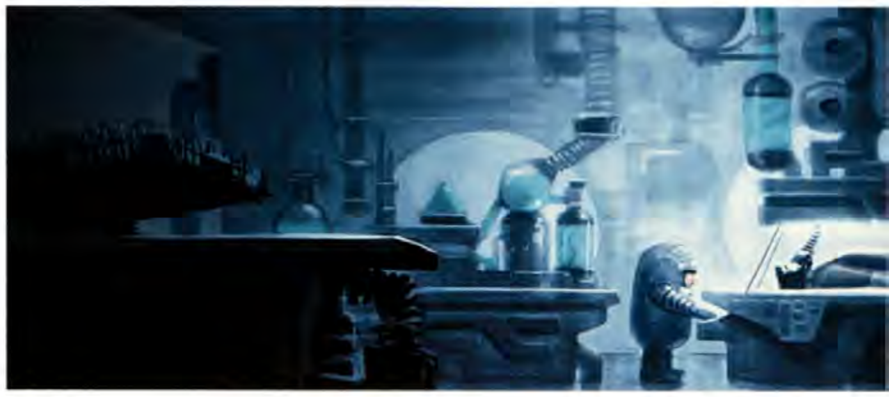
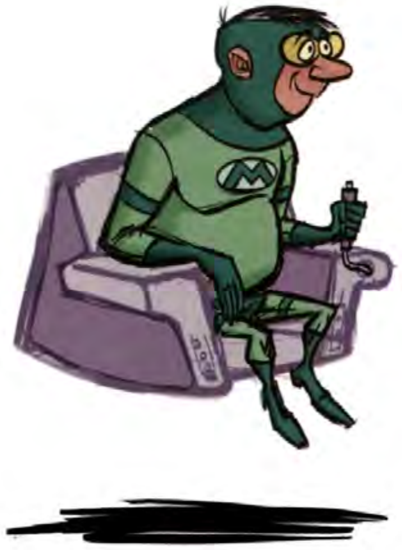








MINION

Minion is the character who went through the most design permutations during development. Yet in terms of his role, he is a constant and key player: the rare voice of reason in Megamind's world, always ready to take one for the two-man team.

Minion derives from the French word for "small," though Minion in *Megamind* is anything but. This best friend and aide-de-camp is a towering eight-hundred-pound gorilla-oid robot: a futuristic armature operated by Megamind's brainy pet fishy.

Early stages had Minion as an adorably goofy, rounded, knob-nosed 1950s-style sidekick in aviator goggles. Character designer Sylvain Deboissy initially saw him as an enthusiastic yet wary space-suit-clad eternal kid.

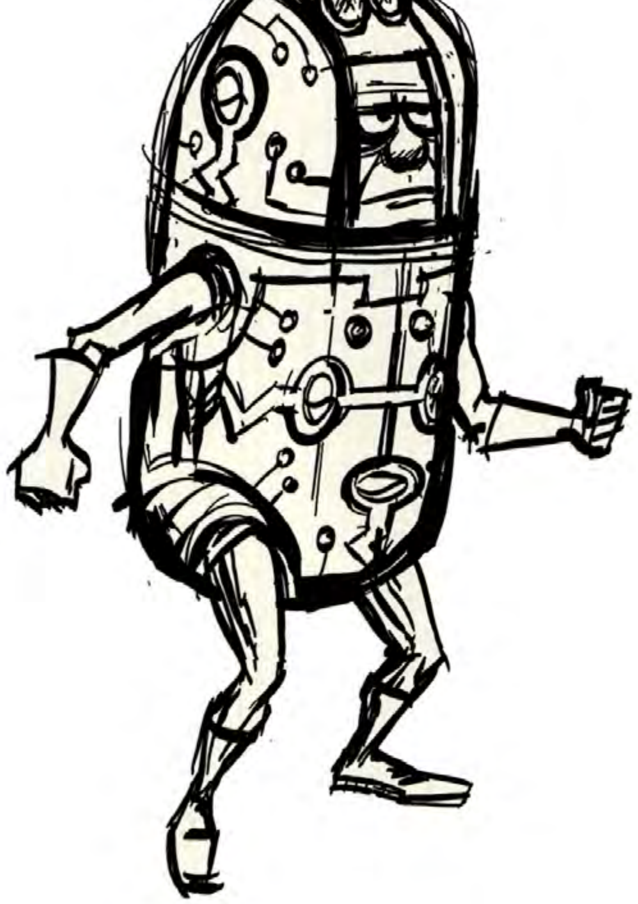
Character designer Andy Bialk's sketches, however, pointed toward a formidable new conception, suggesting that Minion ought to be a physically imposing purple-clad lunk. His previous vision of a chipper buddy next door went away along with the retro-future original design approach to Megamind himself.

Yet another angle had Minion, like Jack Kirby's character Metron, floating in a superpowered chair. And then there was the take that modeled him on the encapsulated cyborg Modok, a Kirby villain who spent some futile time trying to kill off Captain America.

Finally, the ever-changing Minion was led in a more uncanny direction. Rather than provide Megamind with a more traditional sidekick, the filmmakers decided that the supervillain would instead build one around the fish from his home planet. The cybernetic combination that resulted is both an inspired design and an expression of Megamind's genius and isolation. "Everybody liked the gorilla/fish combination, although there was some squeamishness about it being an actual gorilla, so we made it a robot," says production designer David James.

Director Tom McGrath recalls, "Lara Breay and I were looking through development art. We were thinking we couldn't get away with a decapitated gorilla." Art director Tim Lamb weighs in: "We decided to dial it back. The idea was to give Minion a robotic body in the likeness of a gorilla, with a fish in a fishbowl for a head."

It was a match made in heaven, with the subsequent details of the design coming together quite naturally. "We instantaneously gravitated toward scary/goofy. He's got a rebreather," recalls James. "He's a robot, but he adheres to some different animation controls. Minion has an incredibly complicated rig of platelets, and extendible arms. These actually exist in his animation model so it can perform normal cartoon squash and stretch."

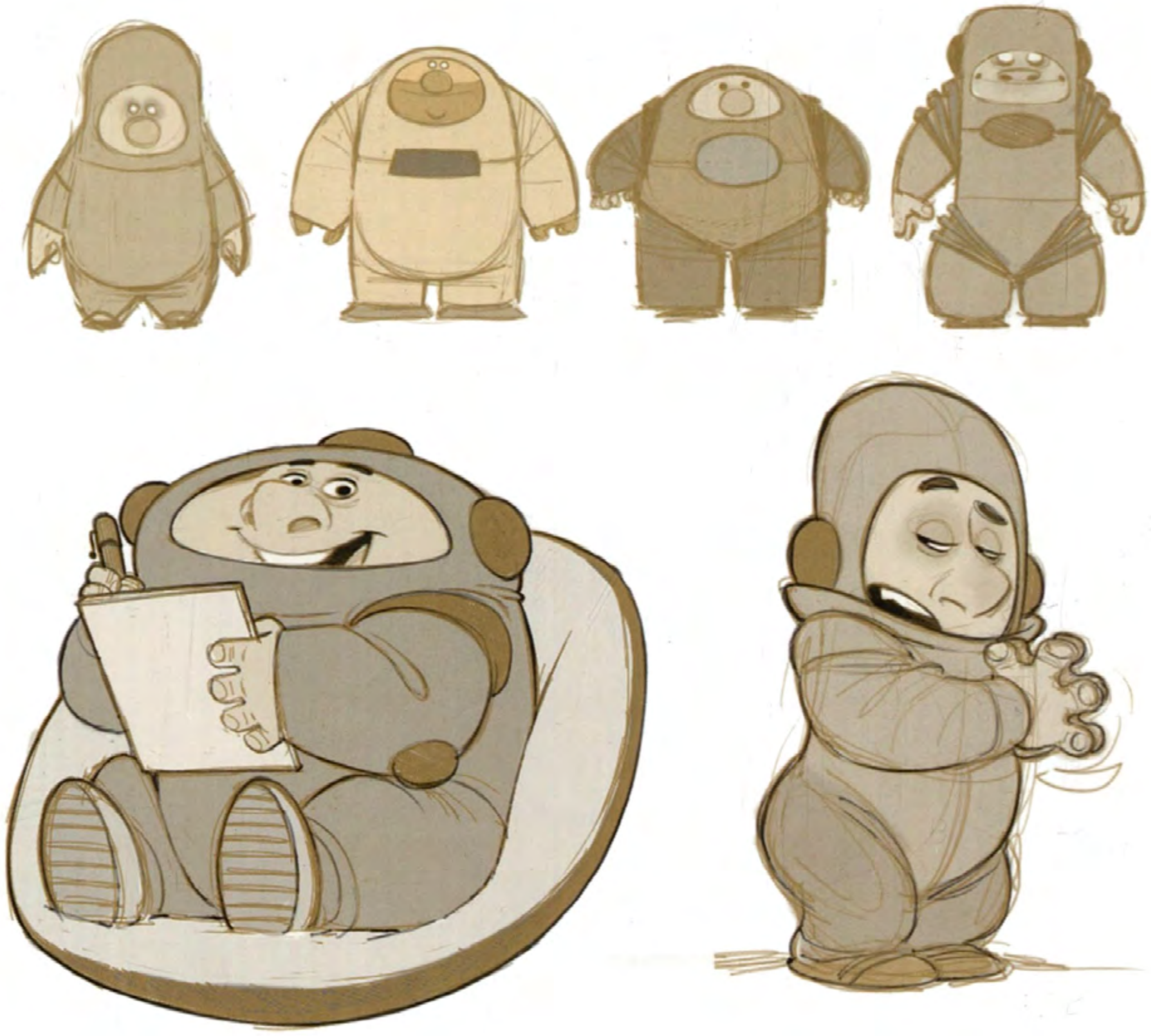


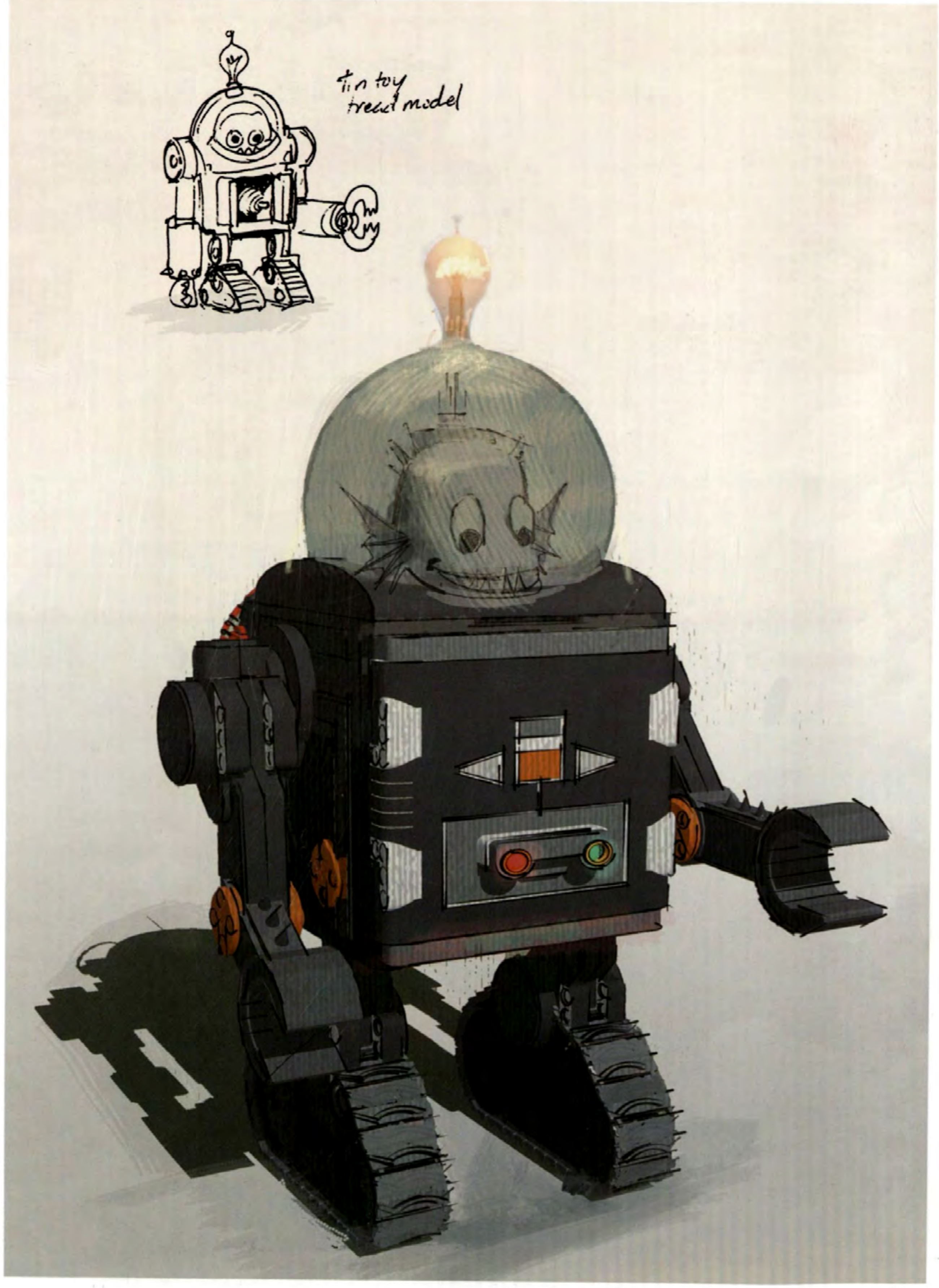
(opposite) MINION IN DIAPER ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(top panel, left to right)* GROUP REACTS TO BLAST ◦ Goro Fujita; MINION WORKING ◦ Ruben Perez; MINION IN THE LAB ◦ Peter Maynez; *(left)* MINION IN HOVER CHAIR ◦ Andy Bialk; *(above)* MINION EXPLORATION ◦ Andy Bialk

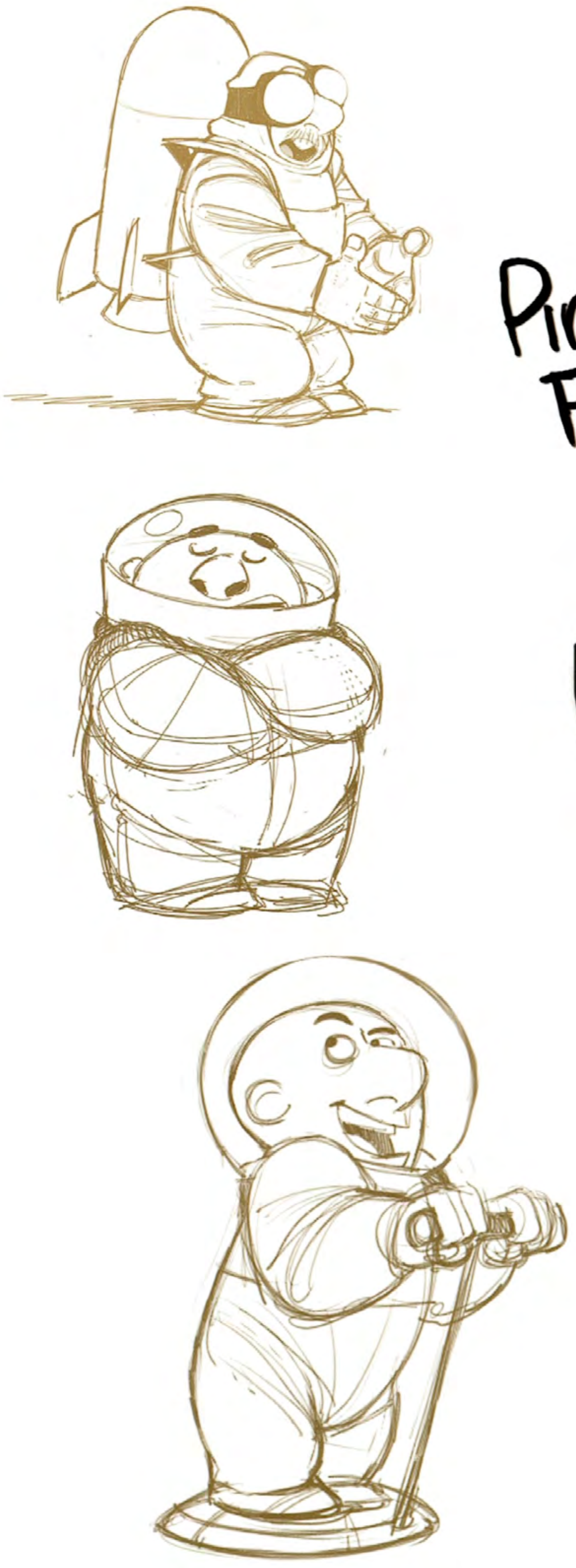
"He's loyal to a fault. Minion is the best friend you could have."

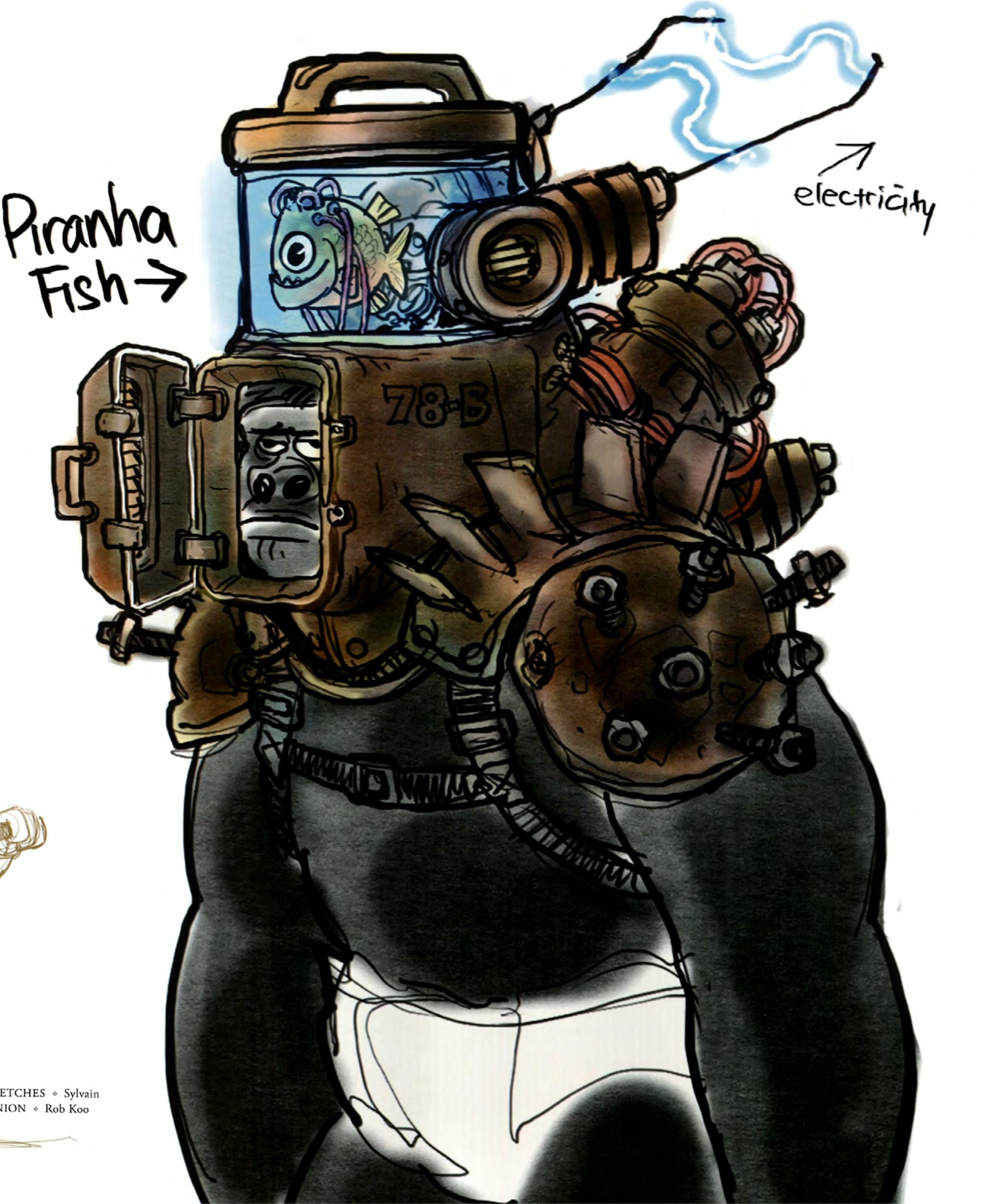
—DENISE CASCINO, PRODUCER

(right) MINION SKETCHES ◦ Sylvain Deboissy; *(below)* MINION EARLY ROBOT ◦ Sunil Pant; *(below right)* MINION EXPLORATION ◦ Kory Heinzen





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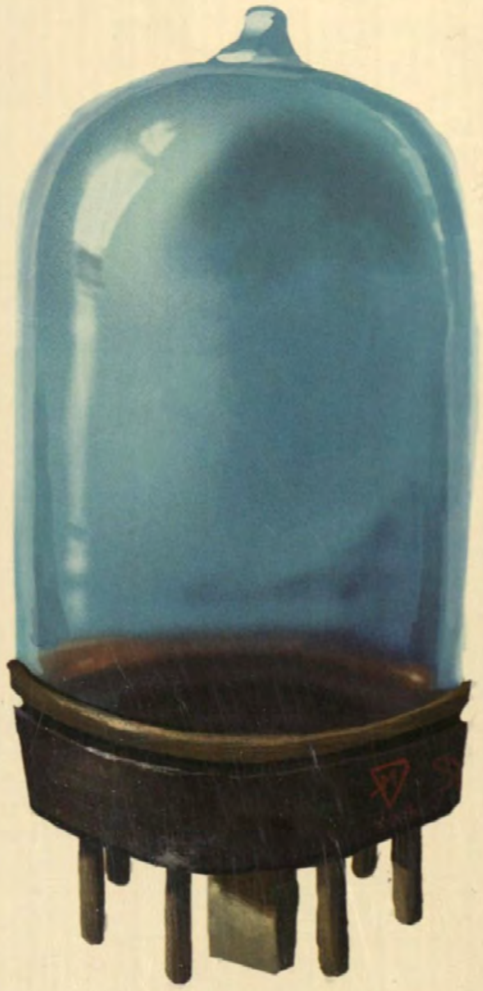
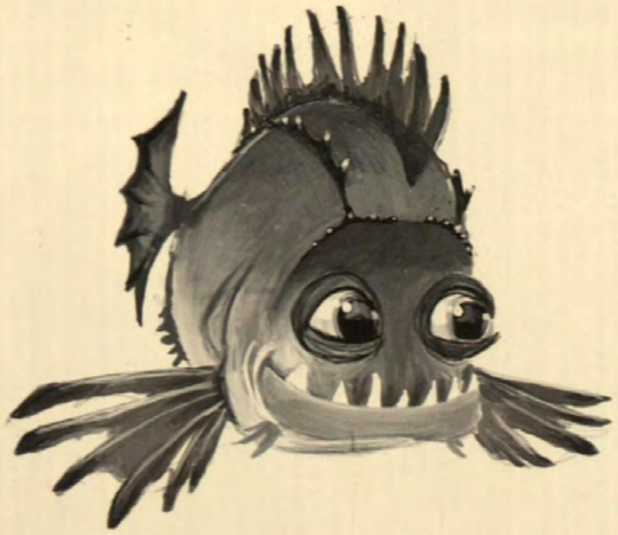
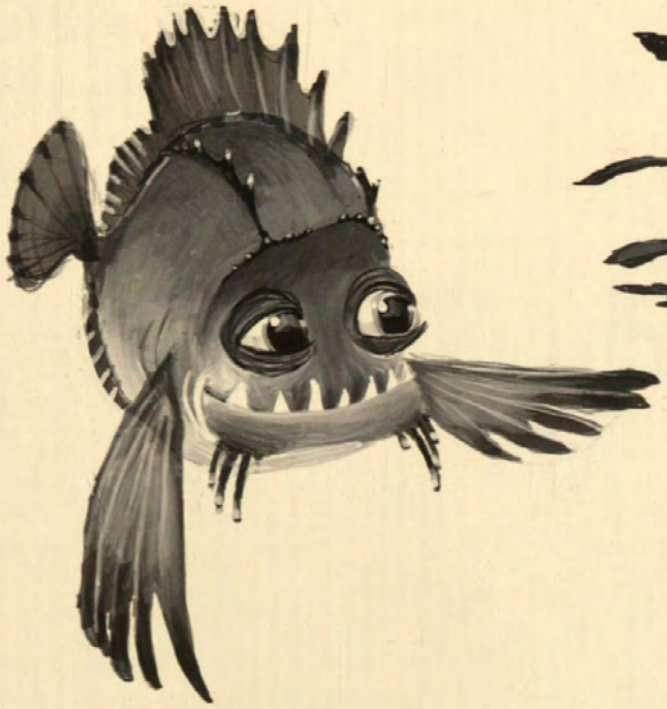
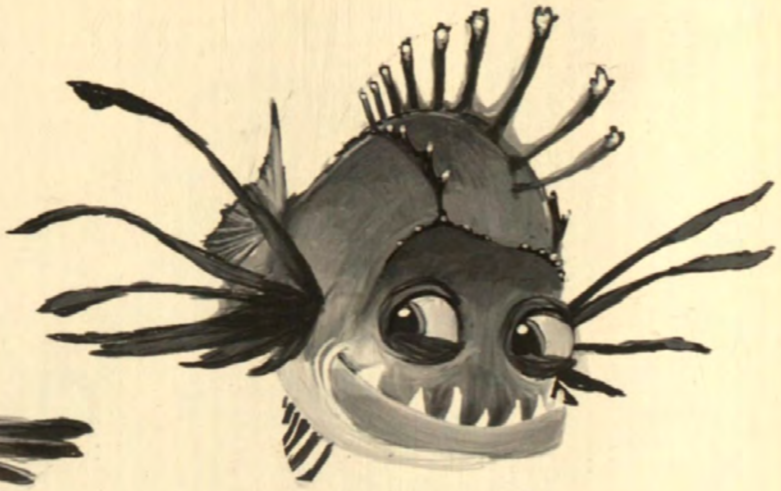
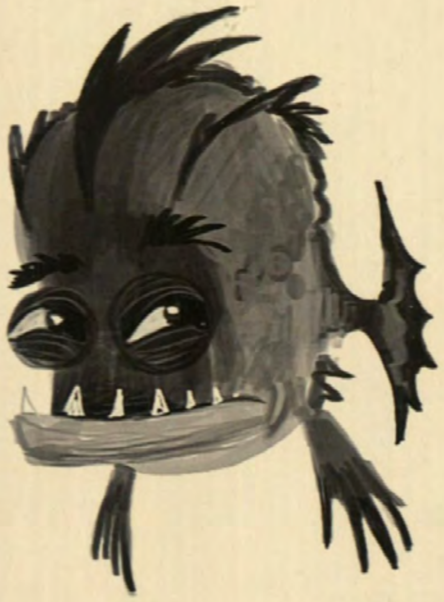
(above) MINION SKETCHES ◦ Sylvain Deboissy; *(right)* MINION ◦ Rob Koo

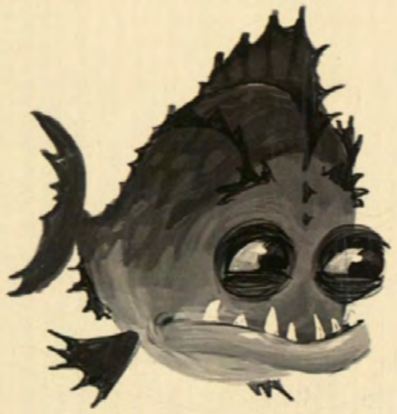




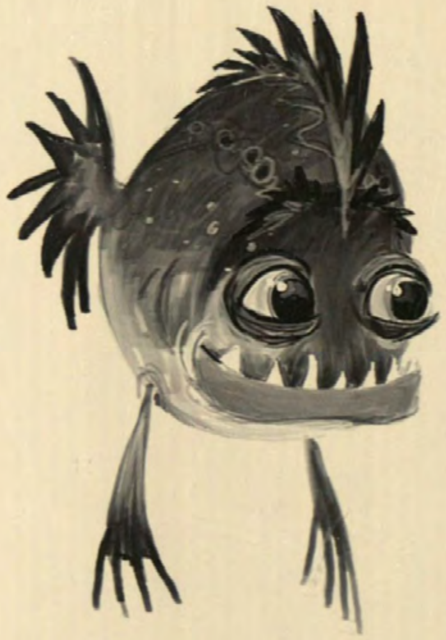


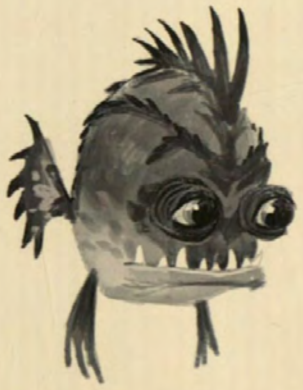


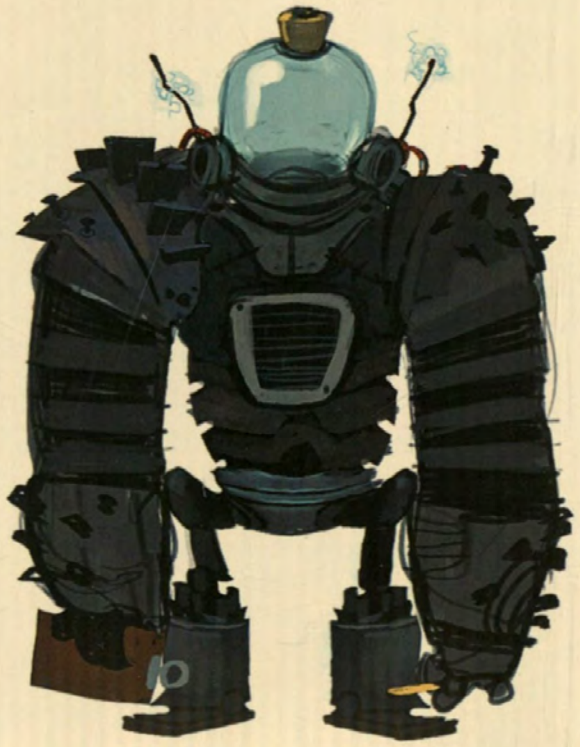


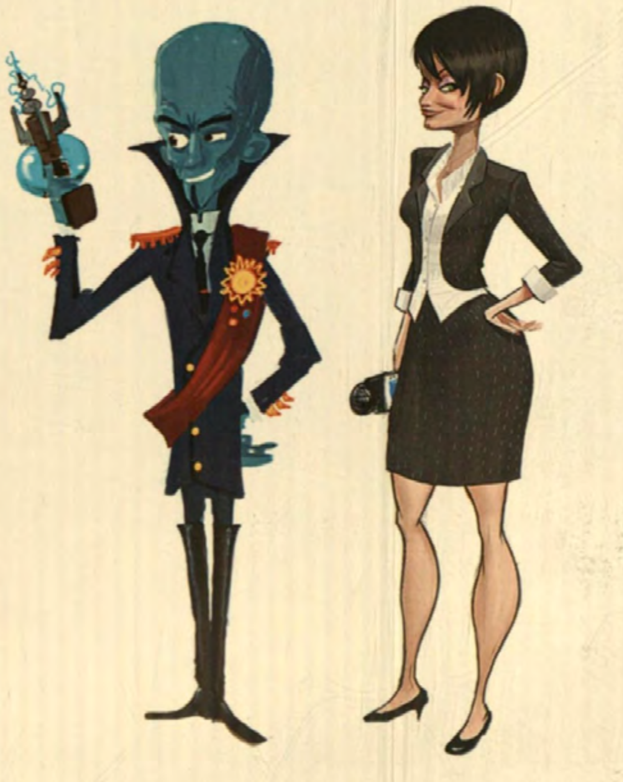


> **"They've been friends their whole lives; they can be frank and open with each other, as opposed to the typical minion/master relationship."**
> —TOM MCGRATH, DIRECTOR

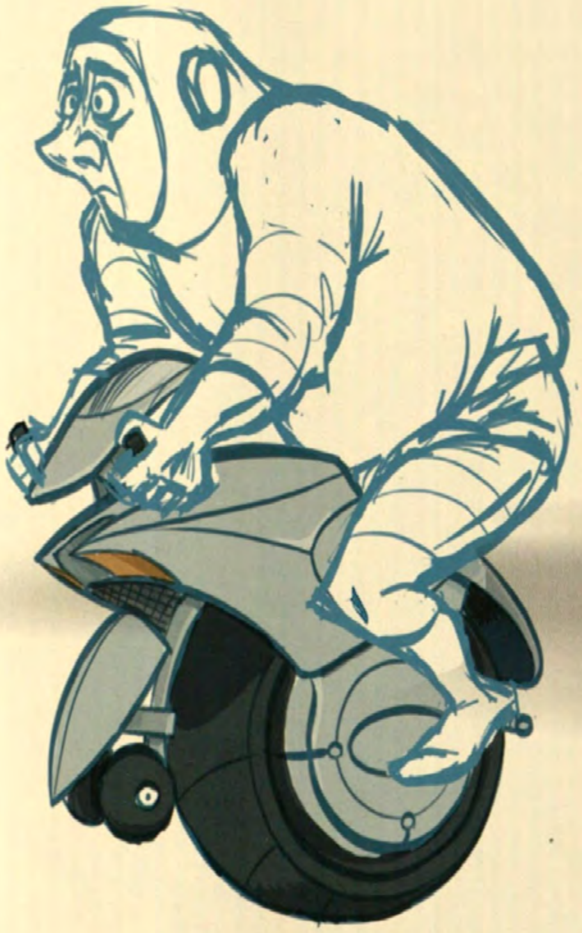


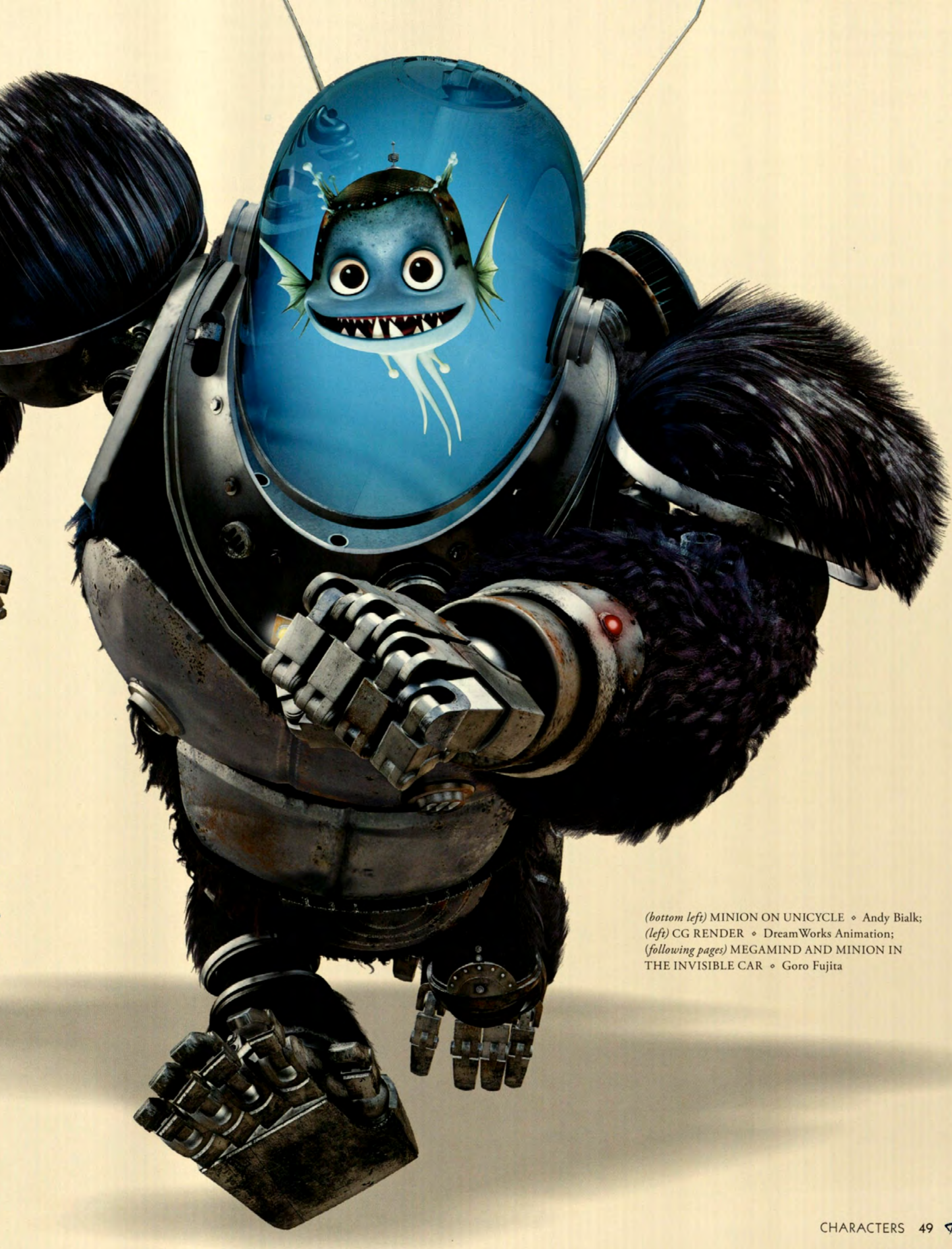




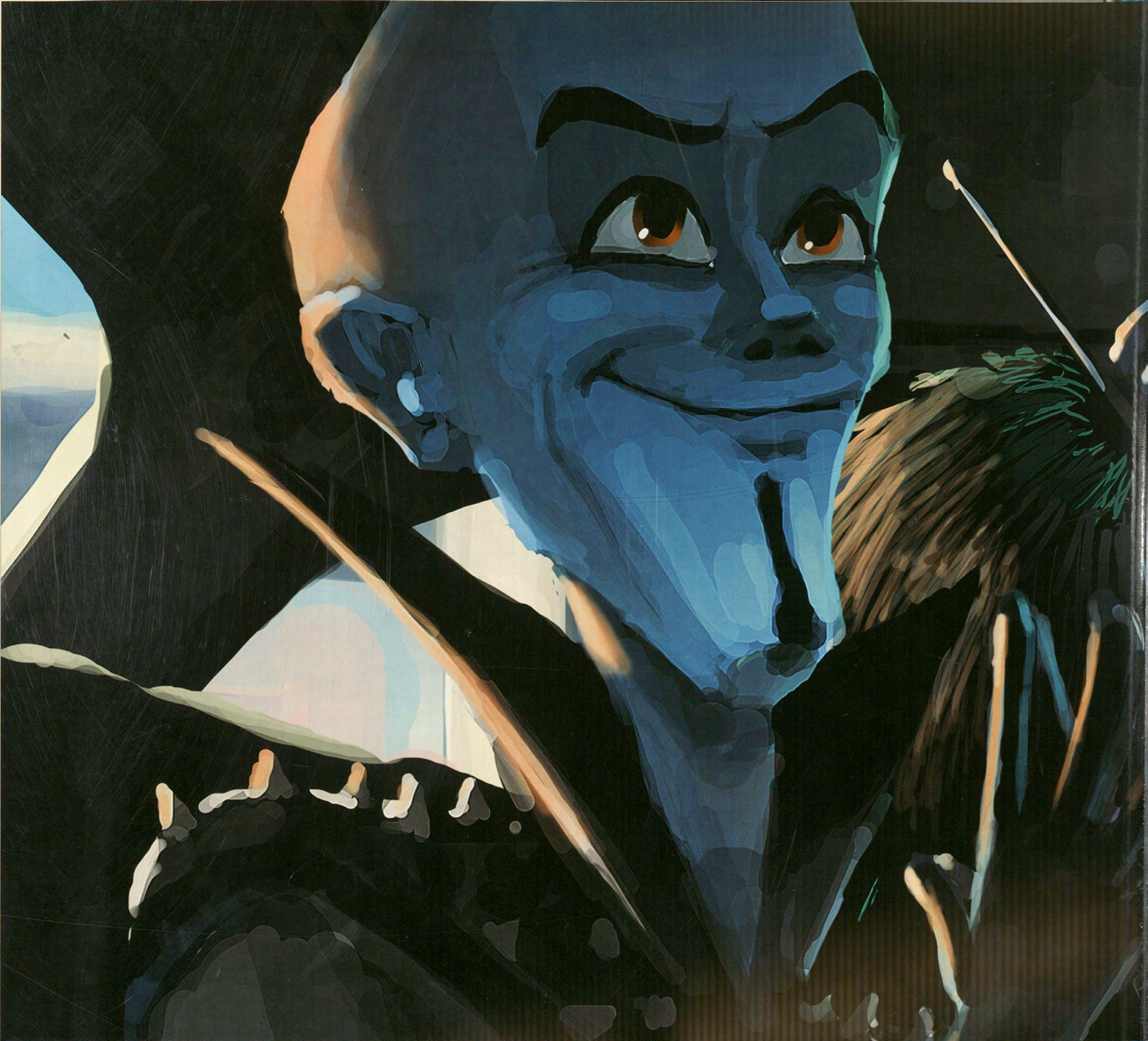


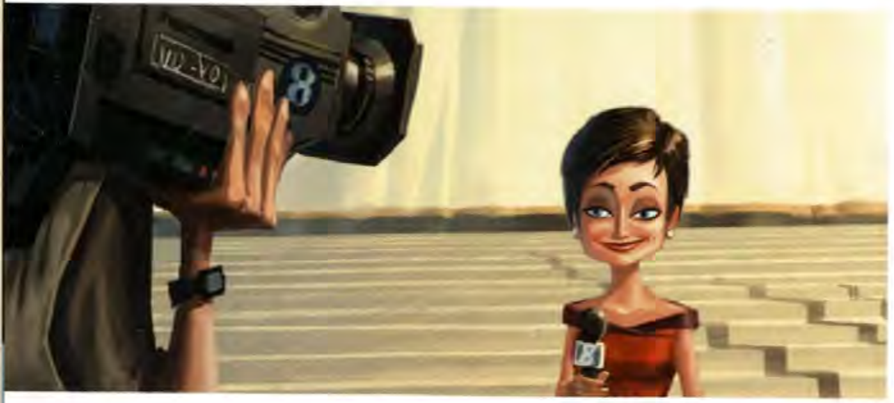
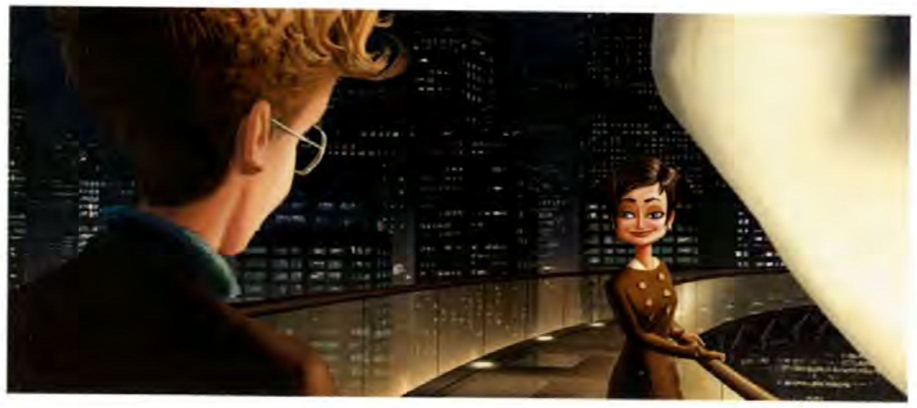
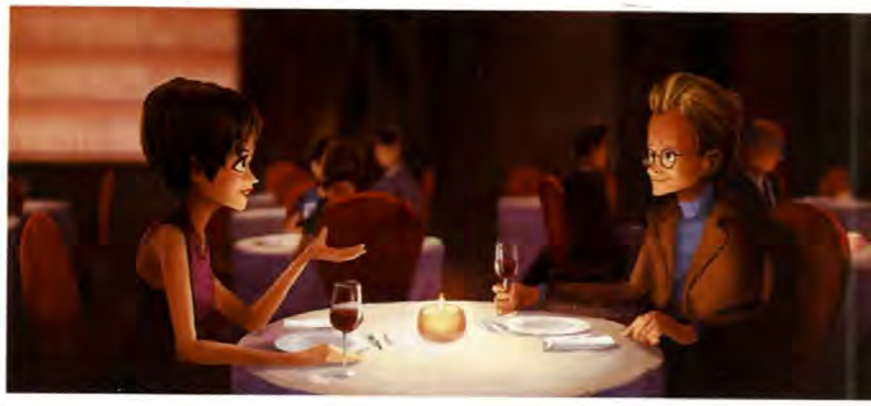
(this page) MINION FISH EXPLORATIONS ◆ Kory Heinzen

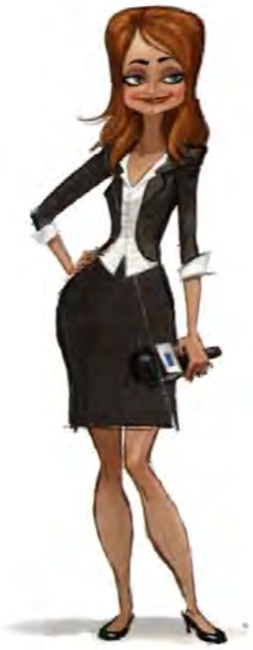




(bottom left) MINION ON UNICYCLE ◇ Andy Bialk;
(left) CG RENDER ◇ DreamWorks Animation;
(following pages) MEGAMIND AND MINION IN THE INVISIBLE CAR ◇ Goro Fujita



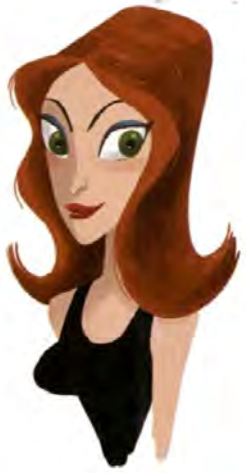
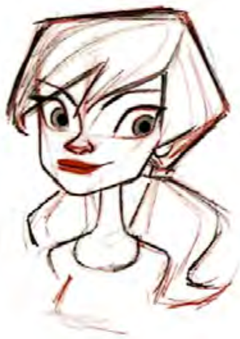






ROXANNE

The comic book archetype of the brash girl reporter is based on real-life historic figures—crusading newspaperwomen and adventurers alike. *Megamind's* filmmakers took their cue from the history here, and were determined that TV reporter Roxanne Ritchi be more than just the female object rescued by a convenient male superhero.

Producers Denise Cascino and Lara Breay didn't come from a comic-book-reading background. Neither did head of story Catherine Rader. "I personally didn't care for the superhero genre," Rader recalls, "with the muscle-bound hero and the screechy, helpless female awaiting rescue."

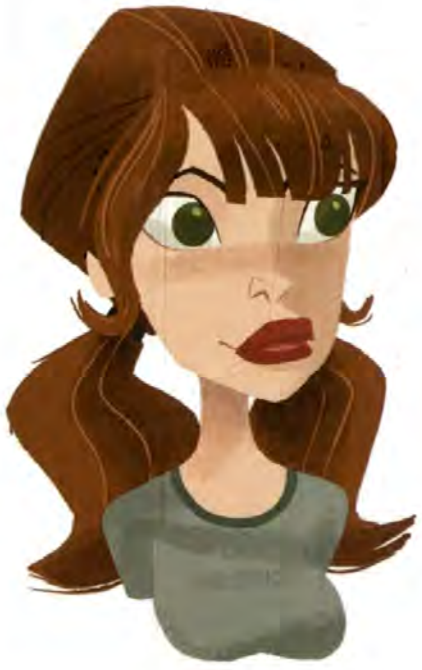



Their challenge was to create a character in Roxanne that would allow them to play up a different side of the *Megamind* story—romantic comedy—to broaden the appeal and potential audience for the film. Essential to this process was making Roxanne a heroine instead of just a hostage. She walks the line, then, as the investigative reporter who discovers Megamind's master scheme, while also being the love object for the superpowered men in the movie: Hal, Megamind, and Metro Man.

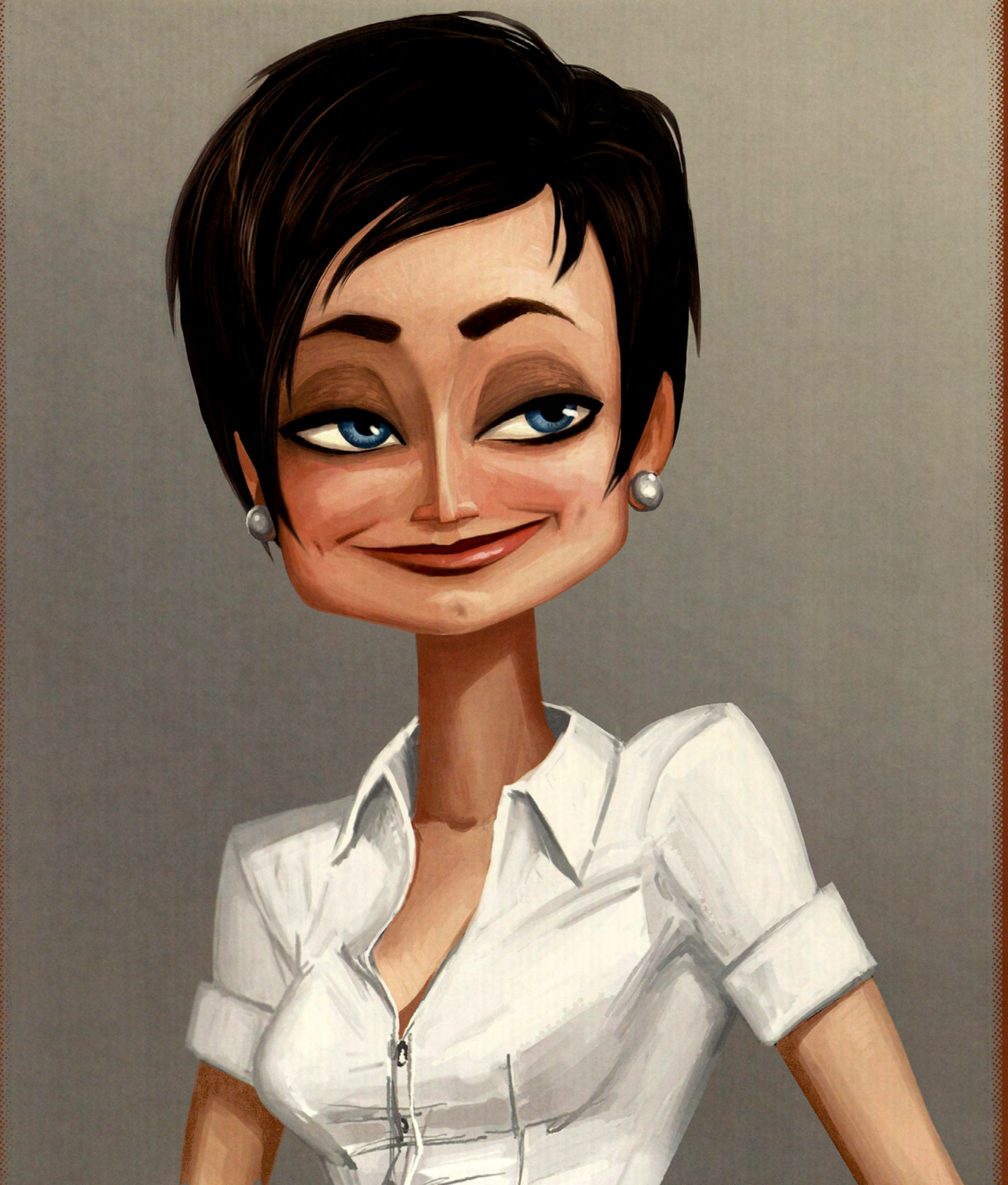
To reflect this active role, it was decided that Roxanne would be as short haired as she was impertinent. Short hair also seemed to promise technical expediency. "We thought a short haircut not only fit the character but also helped us avoid the technical challenges of long hair," recounts art director Tim Lamb. "But this haircut had its own challenges: it took some effort to keep Roxanne looking feminine with short hair."

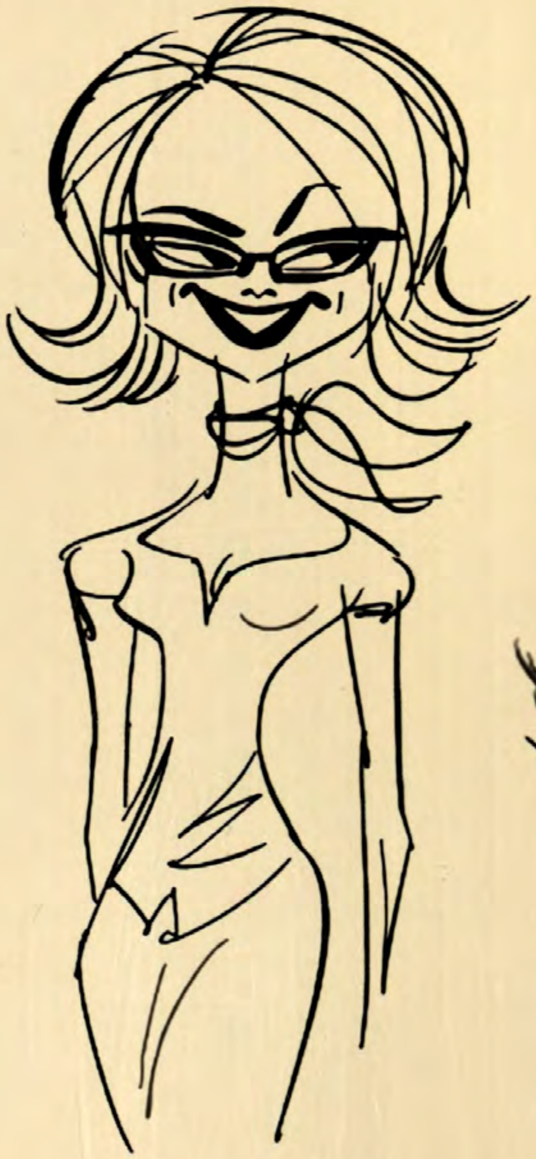
Besides hair, what other devices could be used to signal Roxanne's active character? As a journalist by profession, she should look skeptical and sly. One thought was to give her spectacles—your standard cartoon shorthand for intelligence. Character designer Craig Kellman armed Roxanne with a burning cigarette, while character designer Tony Siruno's take seems inspired by Brenda Starr, comics illustrator Dale Messick's girl reporter of the funny pages, still in print after sixty years. Running a retro-seventies model up the flagpole, character designer Andy Bialk even tried out Roxanne with an Afro.

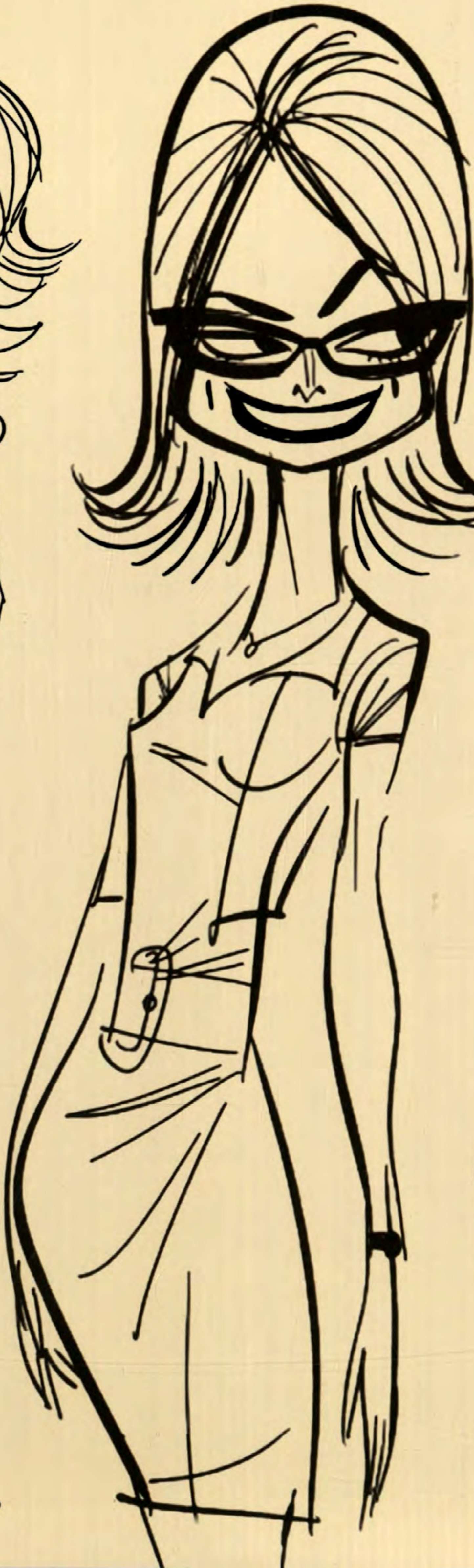
Strangely, the character development art suggests that the various illustrators were moving toward a Tina Fey–type even before Fey signed up as the voice of Roxanne. Fey, of course, is practically an archetype of the appealingly cynical newswoman at this point—not just the perfect voice for Roxanne, but the perfect type.

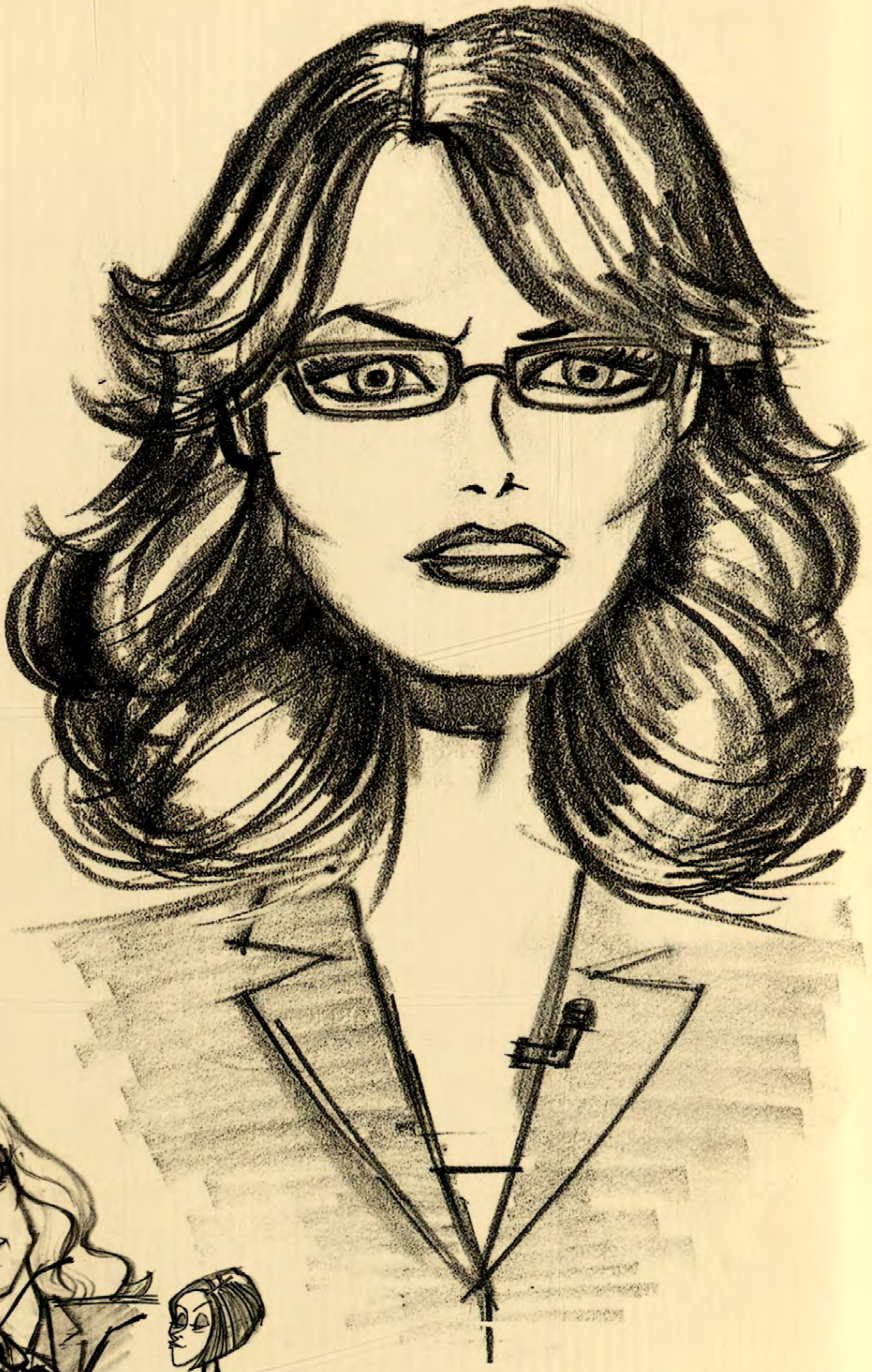


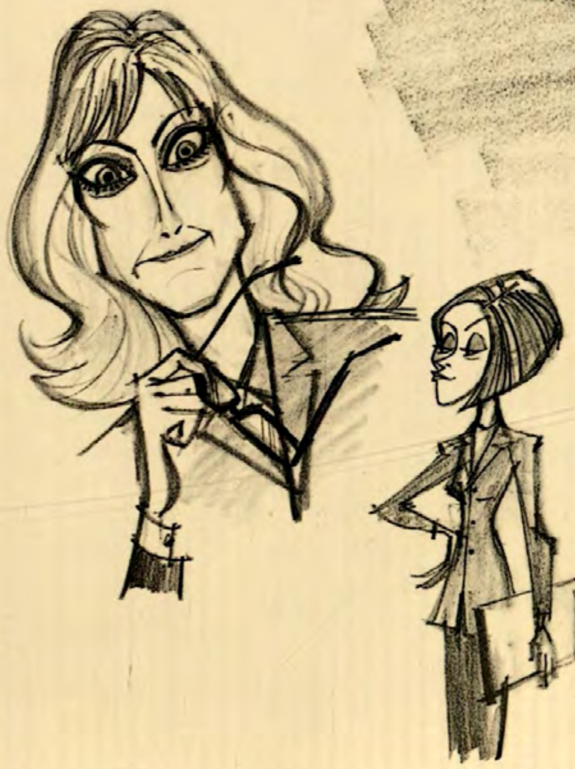
(top panel, left to right) ROXANNE REPORTING ◦ Ruben Perez; ROXANNE & BERNARD ON BALCONY ◦ Ruben Perez; ROXANNE & BERNARD AT DINNER ◦ Goro Fujita; *(left)* ROXANNE ◦ Tim Lamb; *(above)* ROXANNE ◦ Shane Prigmore; *(opposite)* ROXANNE ◦ Tim Lamb



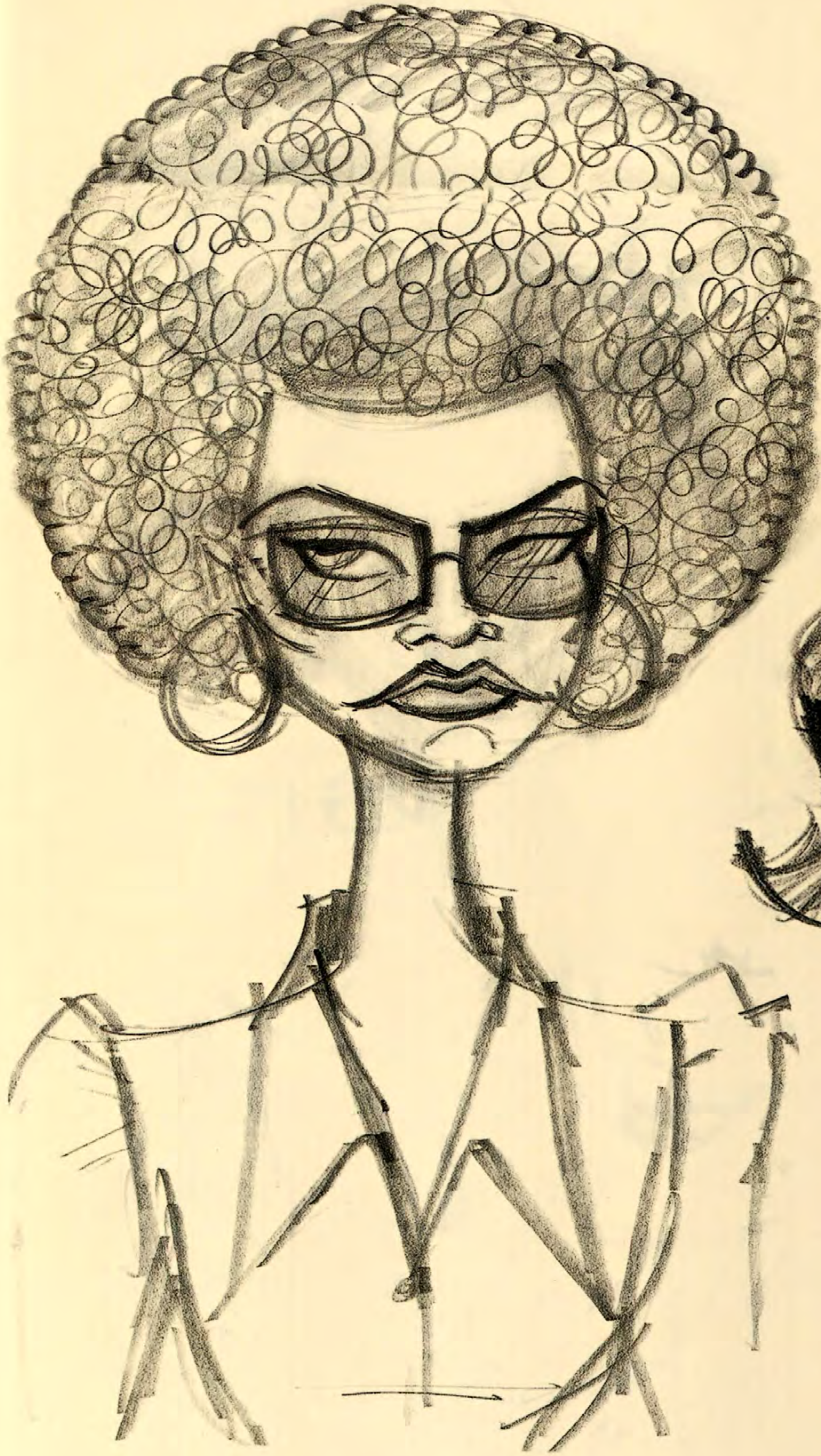


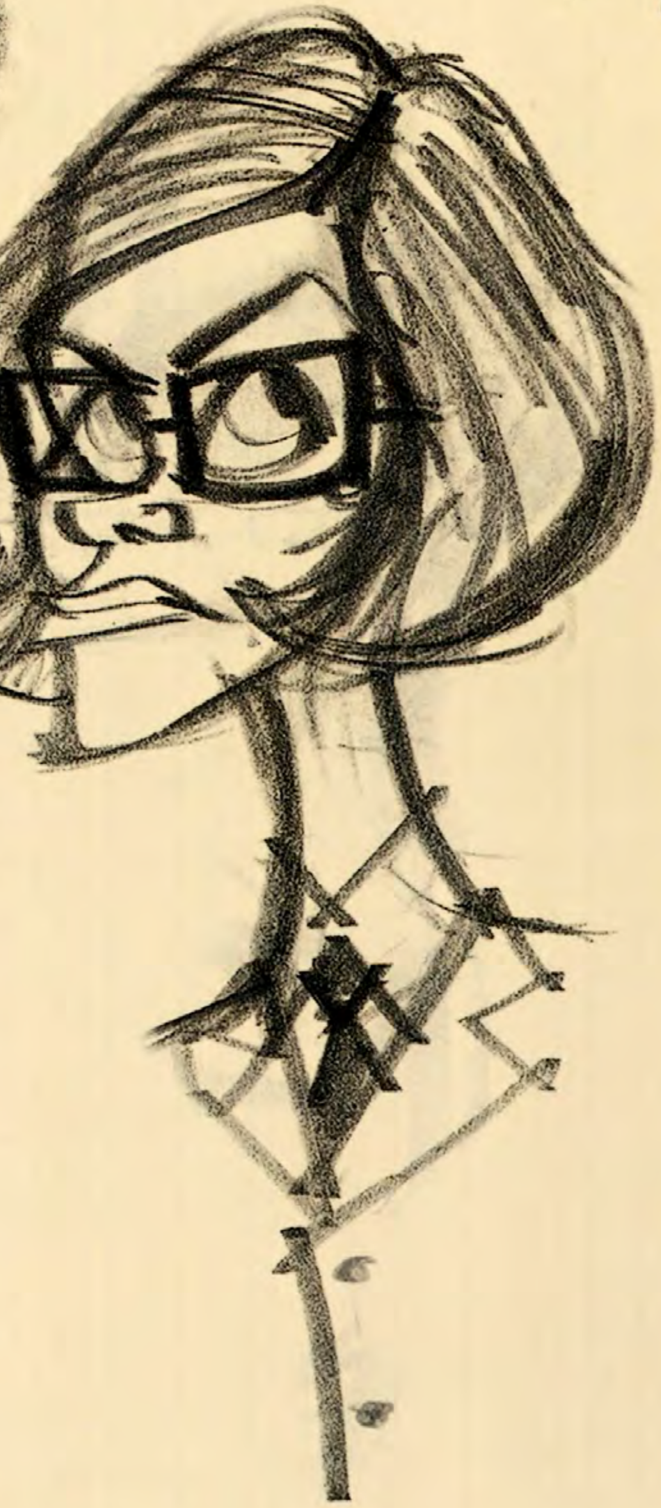


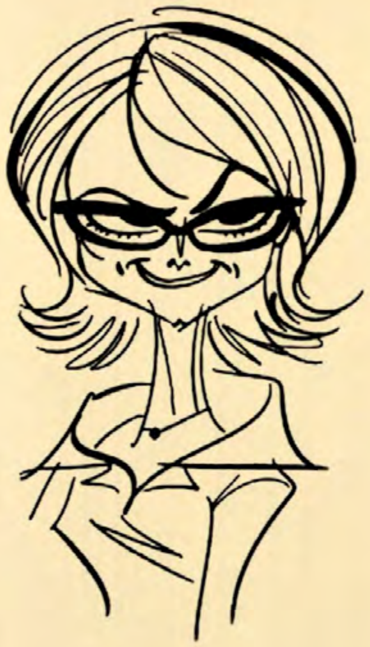


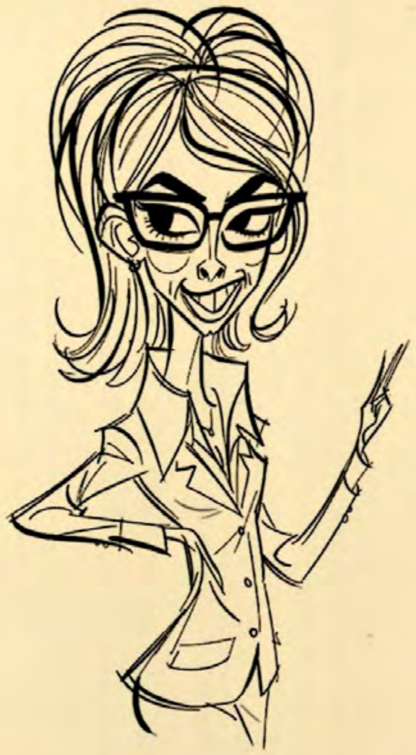


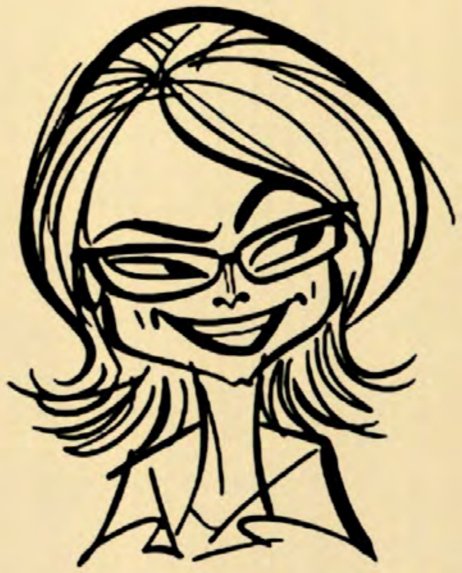
(left) ROXANNE INK DRAWINGS ◦ Craig Kellman;
(above) ROXANNE SKETCHES ◦ Andy Bialk

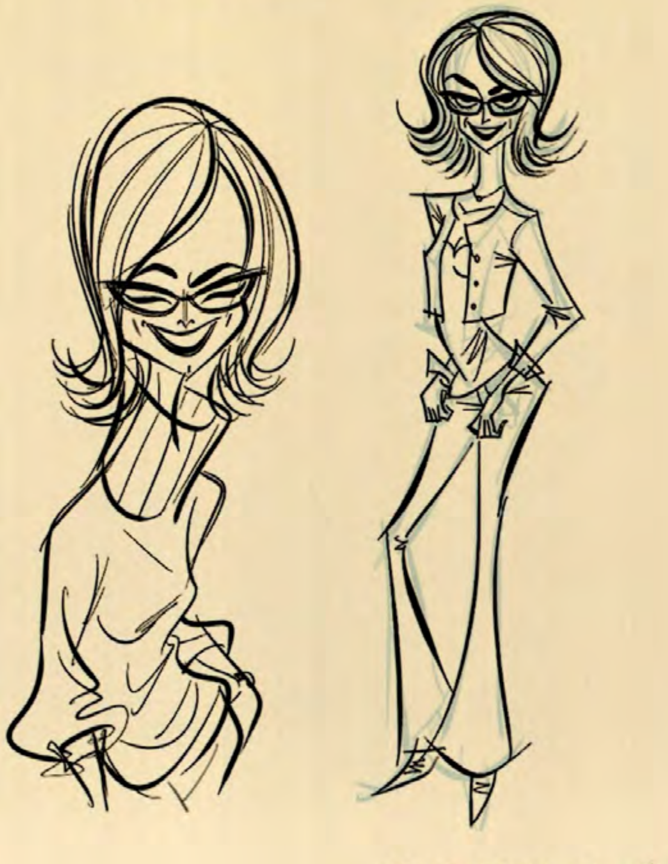




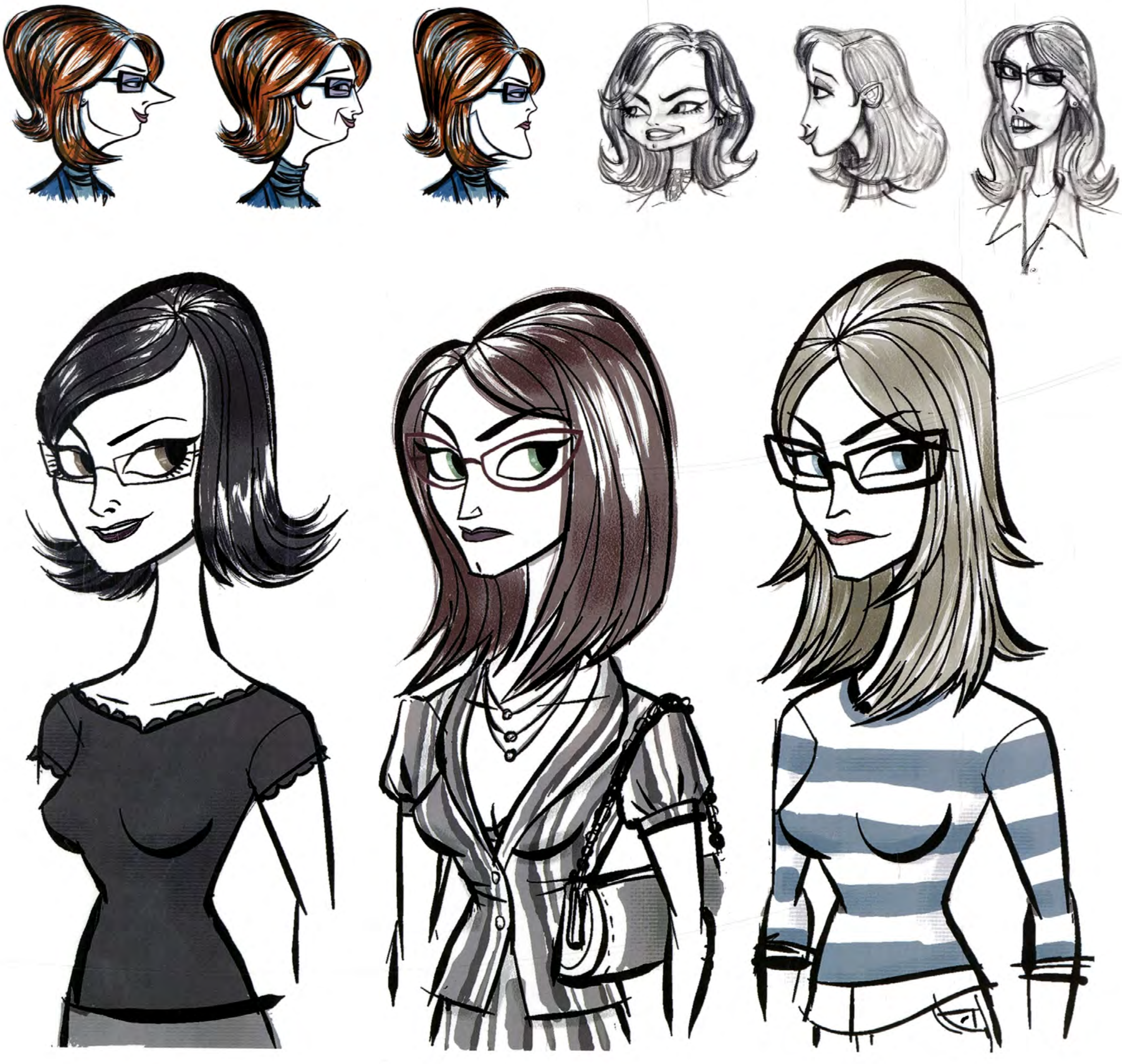






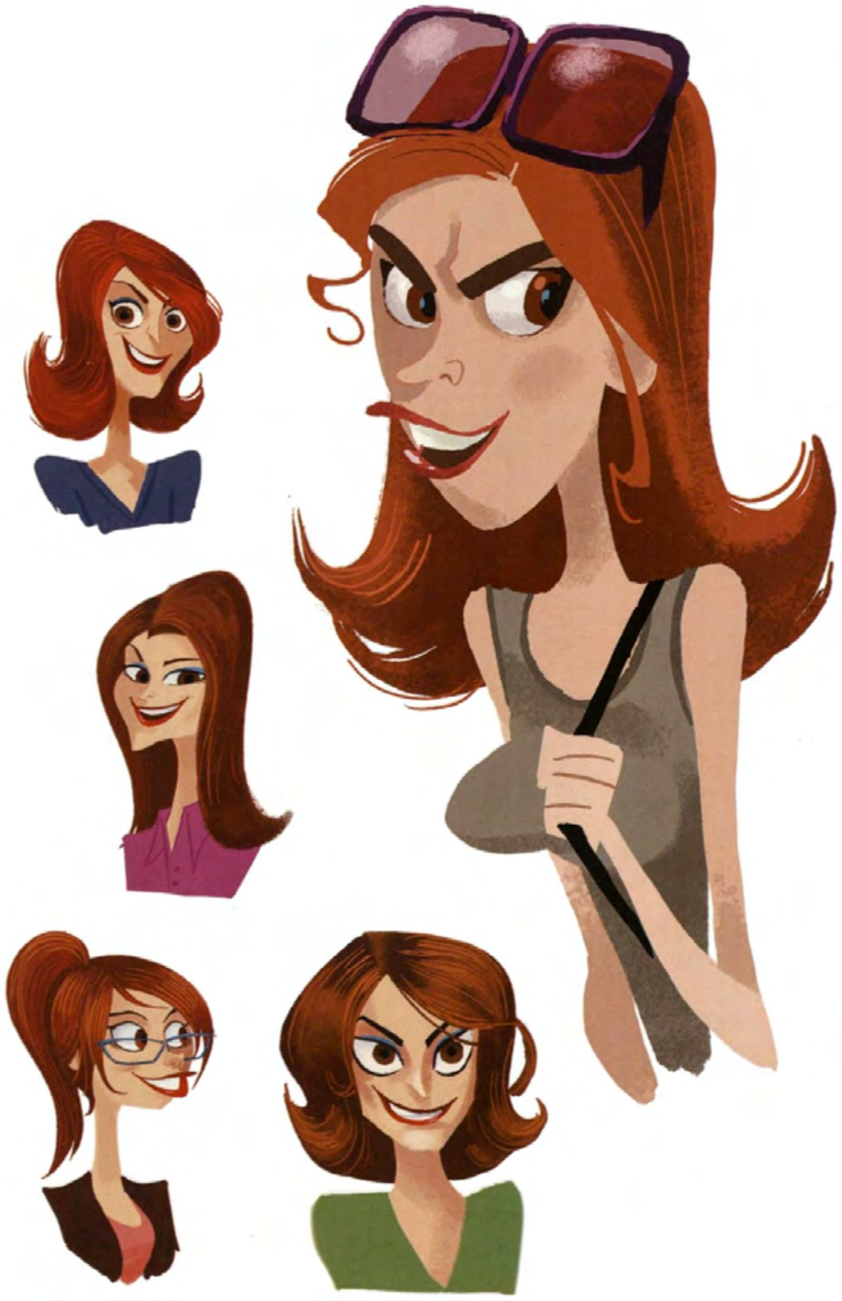


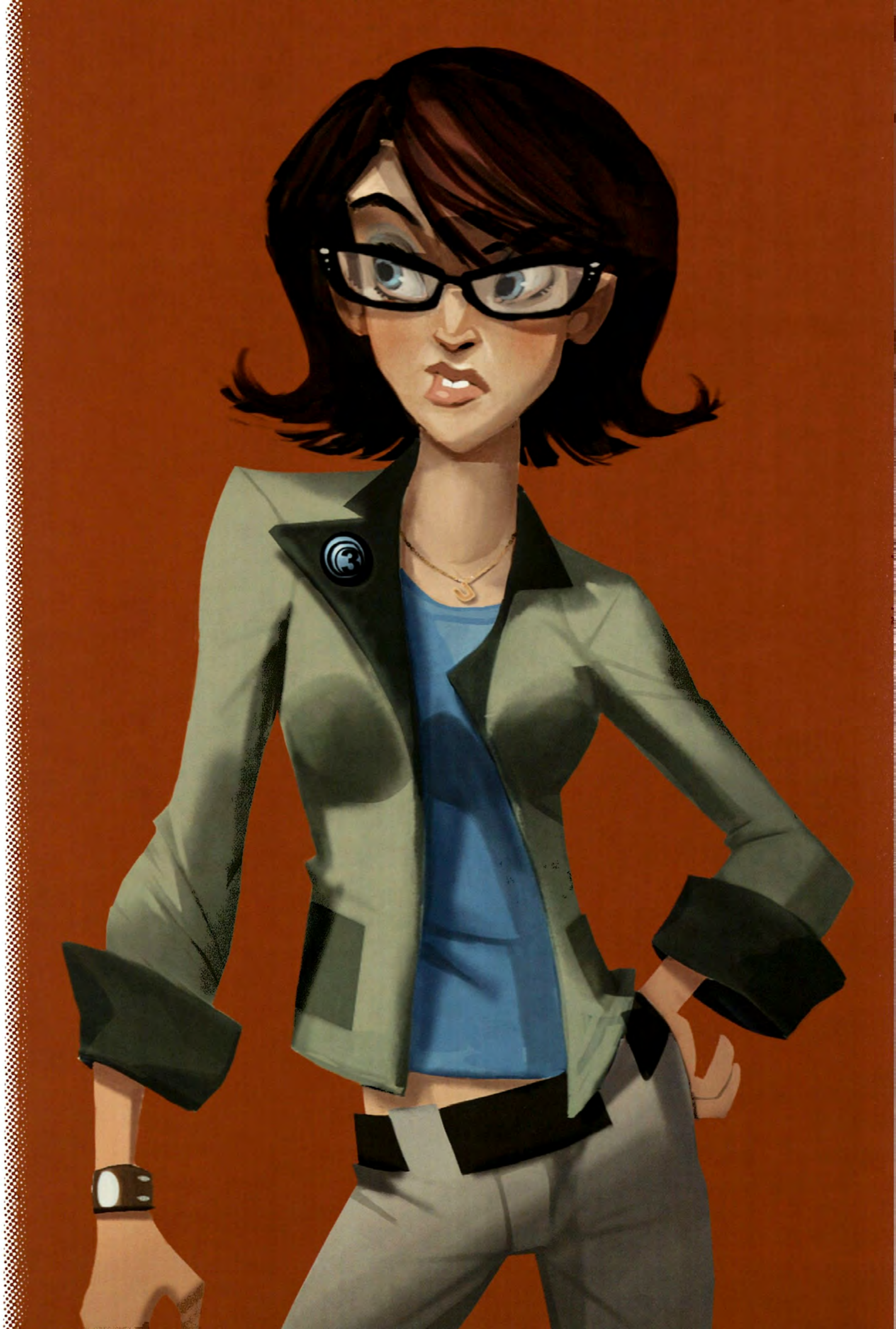
(above) ROXANNE WITH AFRO ◦ Andy Bialk;
(right) ROXANNE SKETCH ◦ Andy Bialk;
(far right) ROXANNE INK DRAWINGS ◦ Craig Kellman



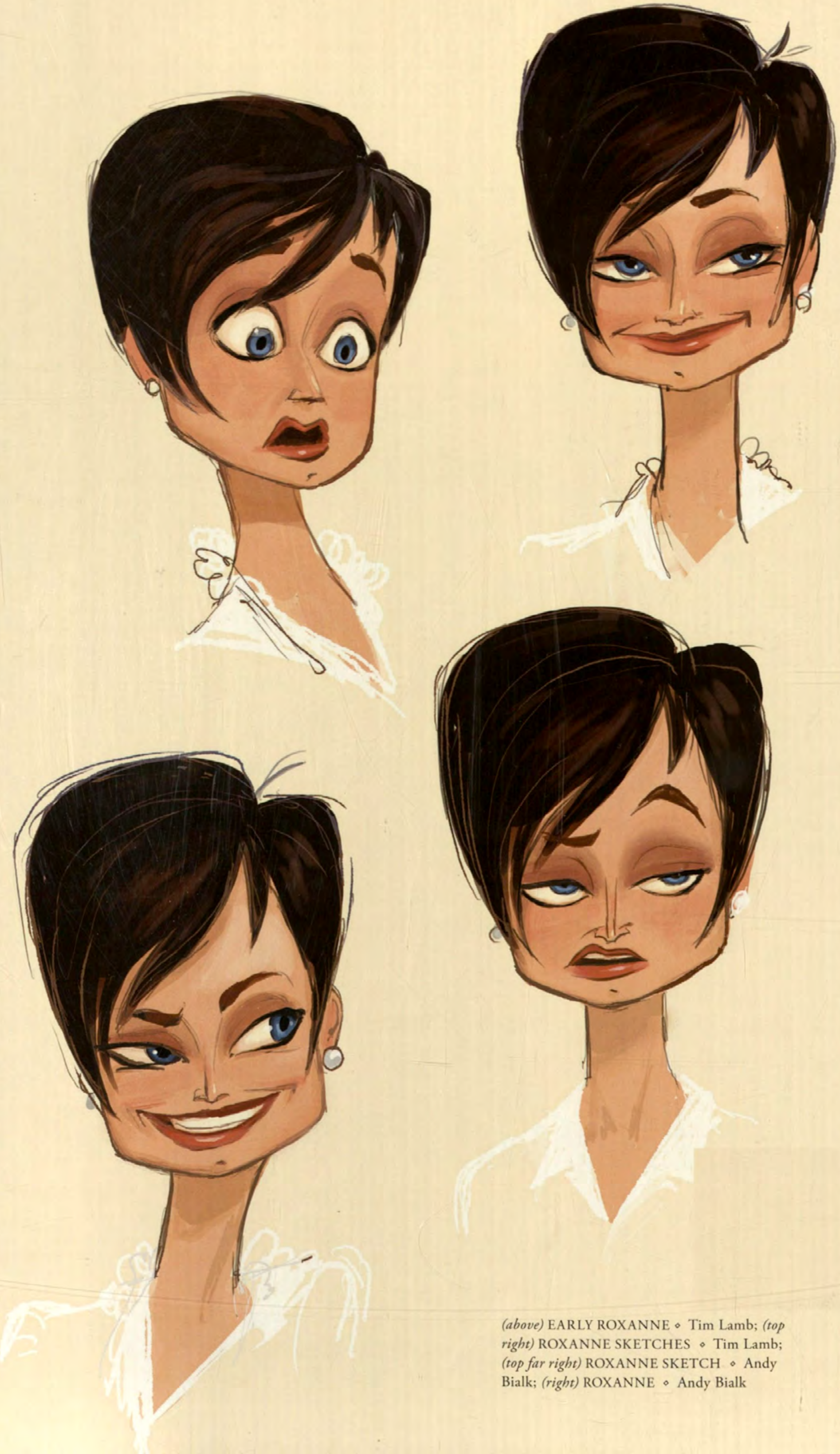
(this page) ROXANNE STUDIES ◦ Andy Bialk

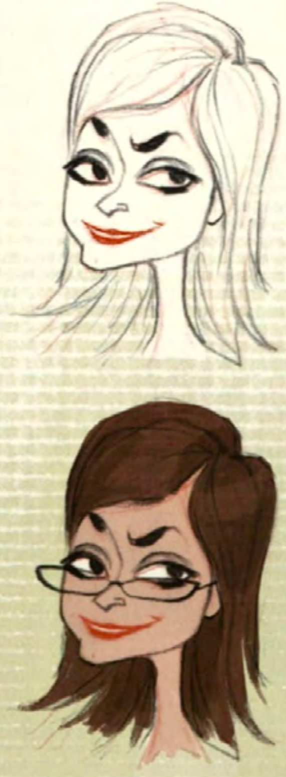
> "We knew she would represent the perspective of the audience. She is the comedic straight woman, she's the love interest, and she's the standard damsel in distress. But during the course of the movie, she's revealed to be so much more."
>
> —LARA BREAY, PRODUCER

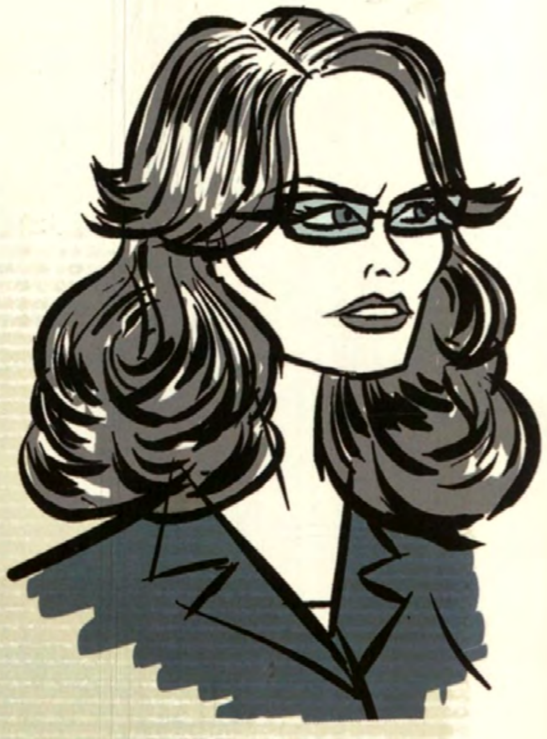


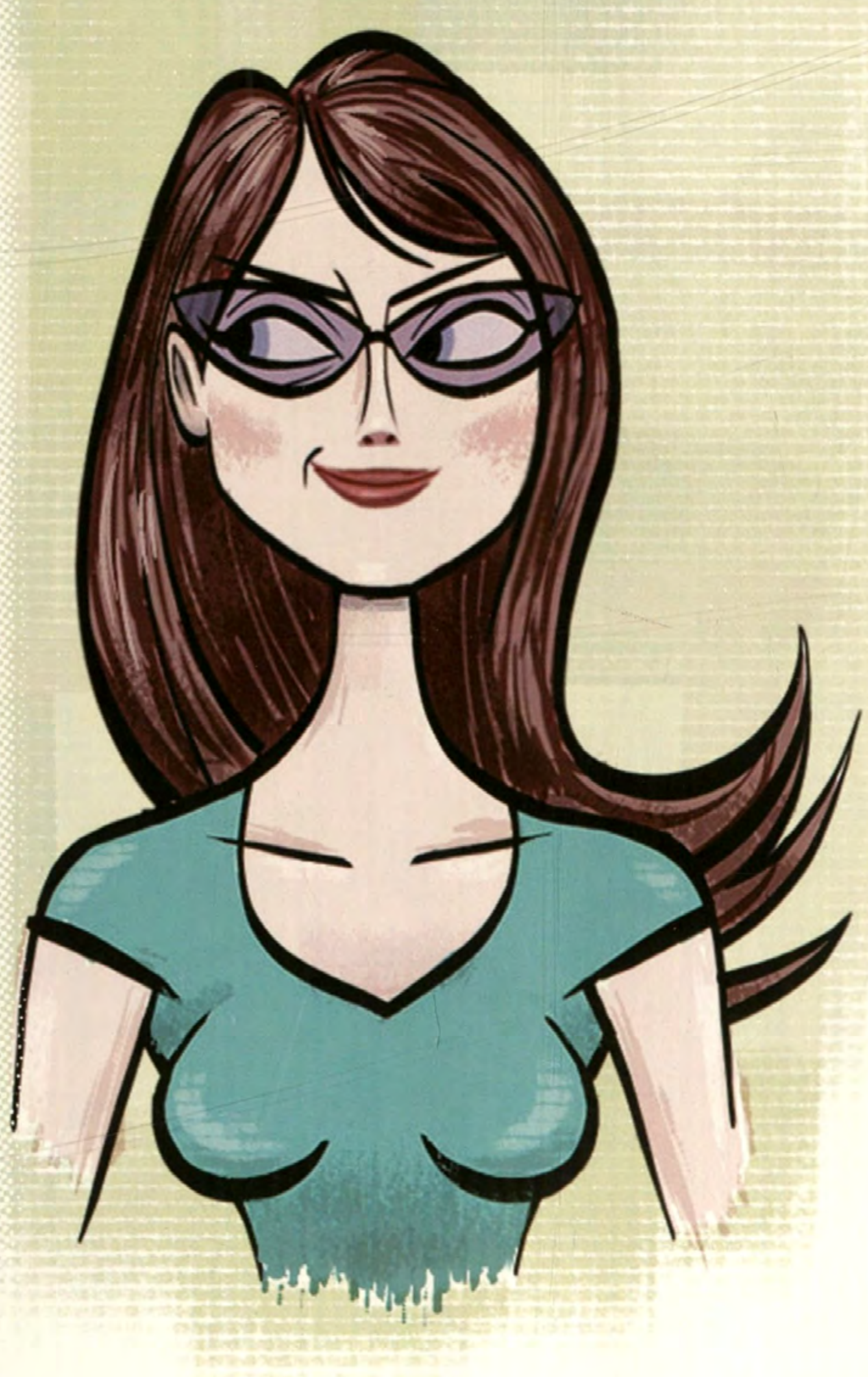


(above) ROXANNE EXPRESSIONS ◦ Shane Prigmore;
(right) ROXANNE ◦ Kory Heinzen

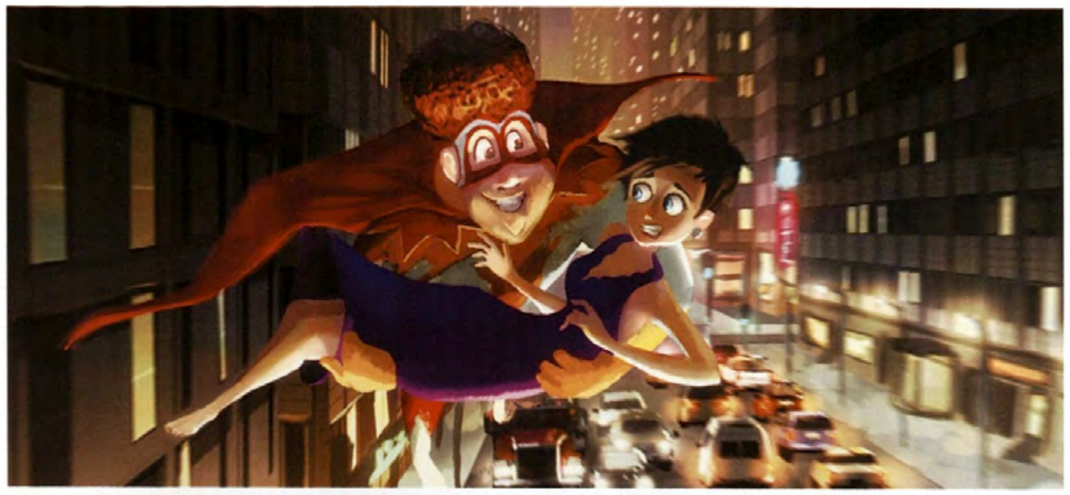


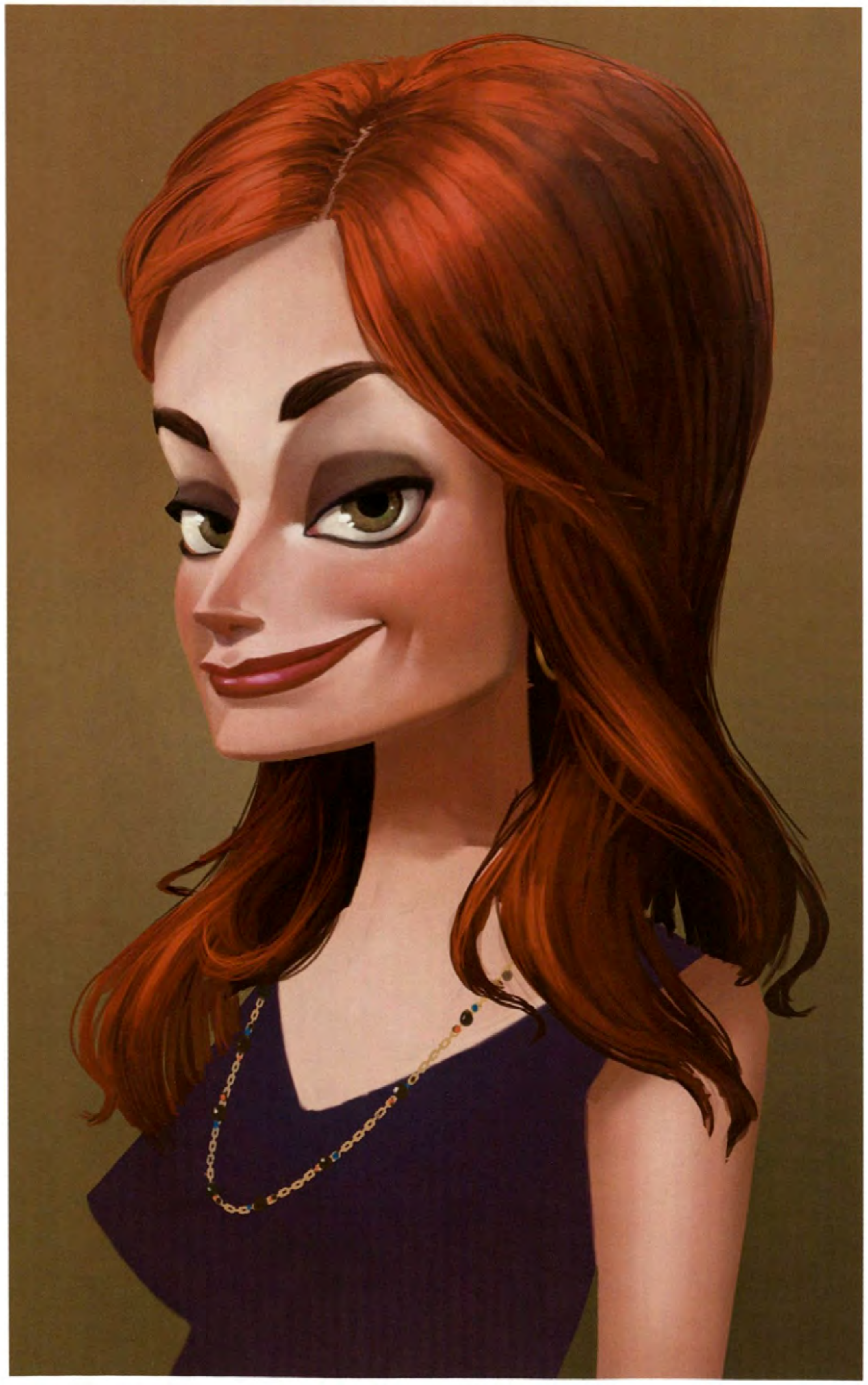




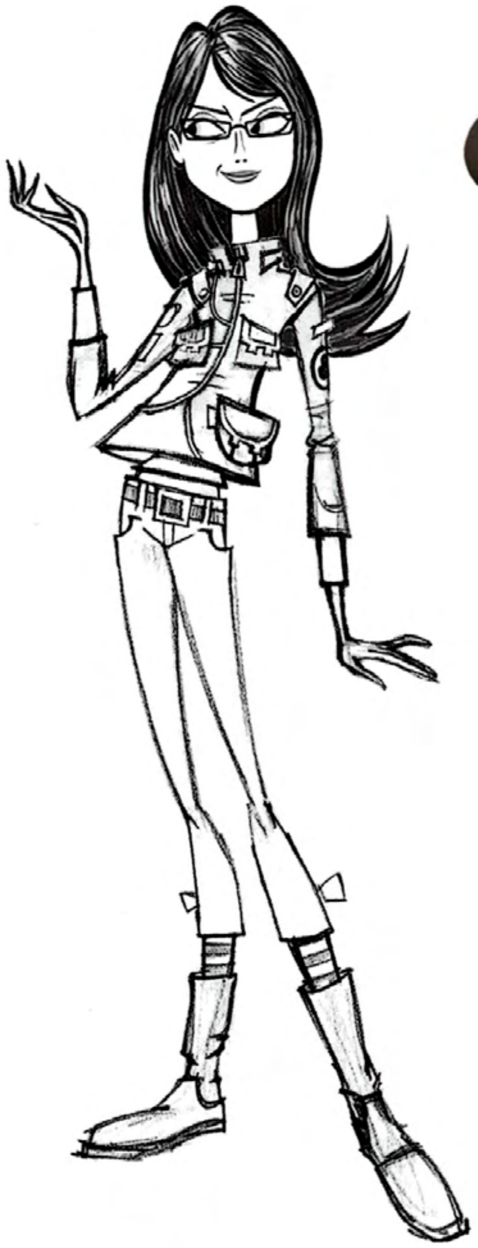


(above) EARLY ROXANNE ◆ Tim Lamb; *(top right)* ROXANNE SKETCHES ◆ Tim Lamb; *(top far right)* ROXANNE SKETCH ◆ Andy Bialk; *(right)* ROXANNE ◆ Andy Bialk

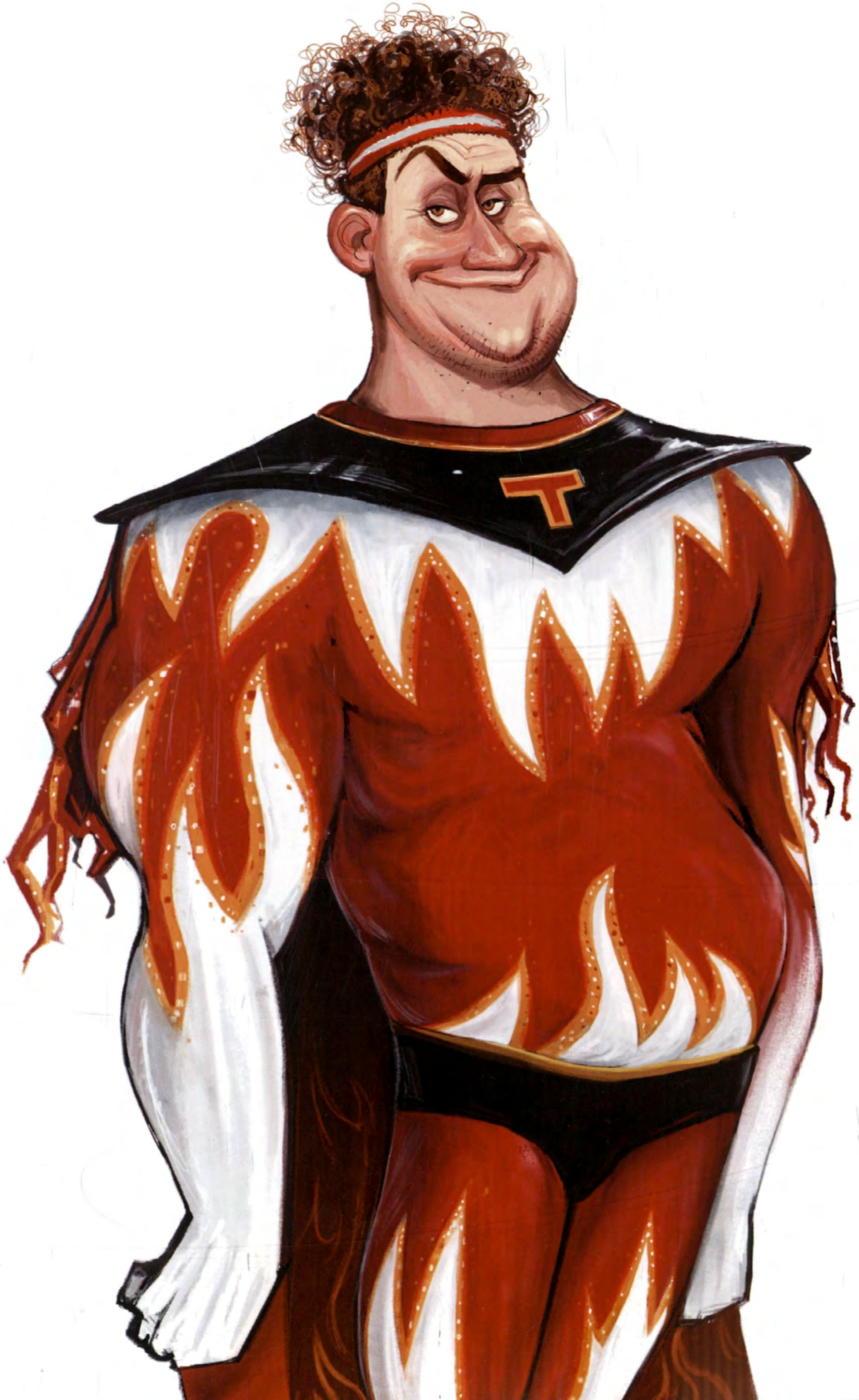




> "As Megamind's newest scheme to create a hero unravels into mayhem, Roxanne has to take matters into her own hands and goes to stop Tighten."
> —CATHERINE RADER, HEAD OF STORY



(above left) TIGHTEN & ROXANNE ◆ Goro Fujita; *(left)* ROXANNE SMILE ◆ Kory Heinzen; *(above)* ROXANNE CHARACTER STUDY ◆ Andy Bialk; *(right)* CG RENDER ◆ DreamWorks Animation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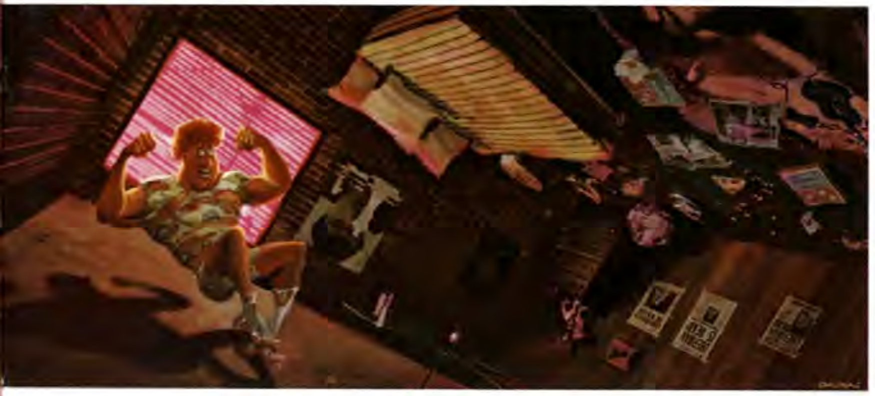
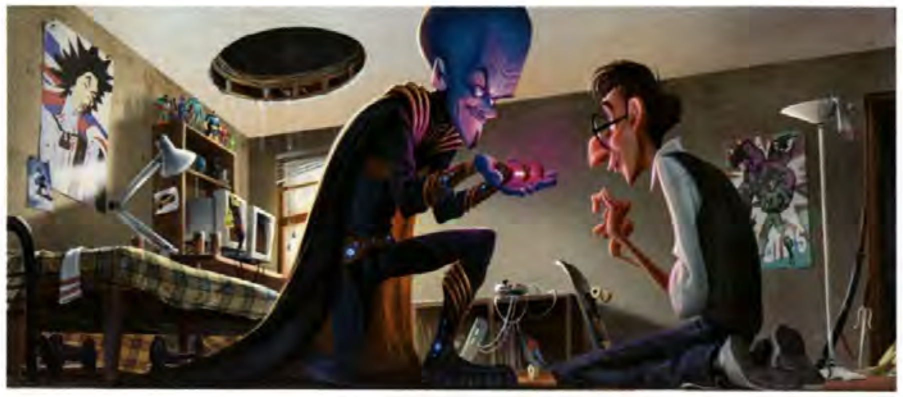
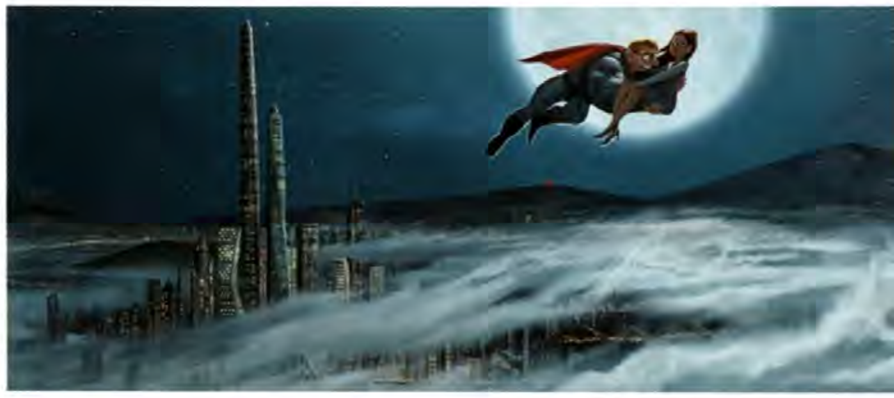
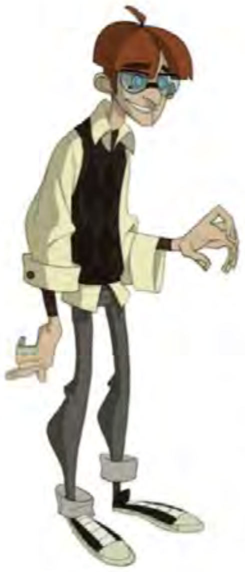








HAL/TIGHTEN

Thanks to Megamind's machinations, Hal is granted the gift of superpowers and rechristened Tighten. He immediately misuses his powers to harass the woman of his dreams: his coworker Roxanne Ritchi, who quickly realizes that this once harmless nebbish is now a threat, a puppet of Megamind.

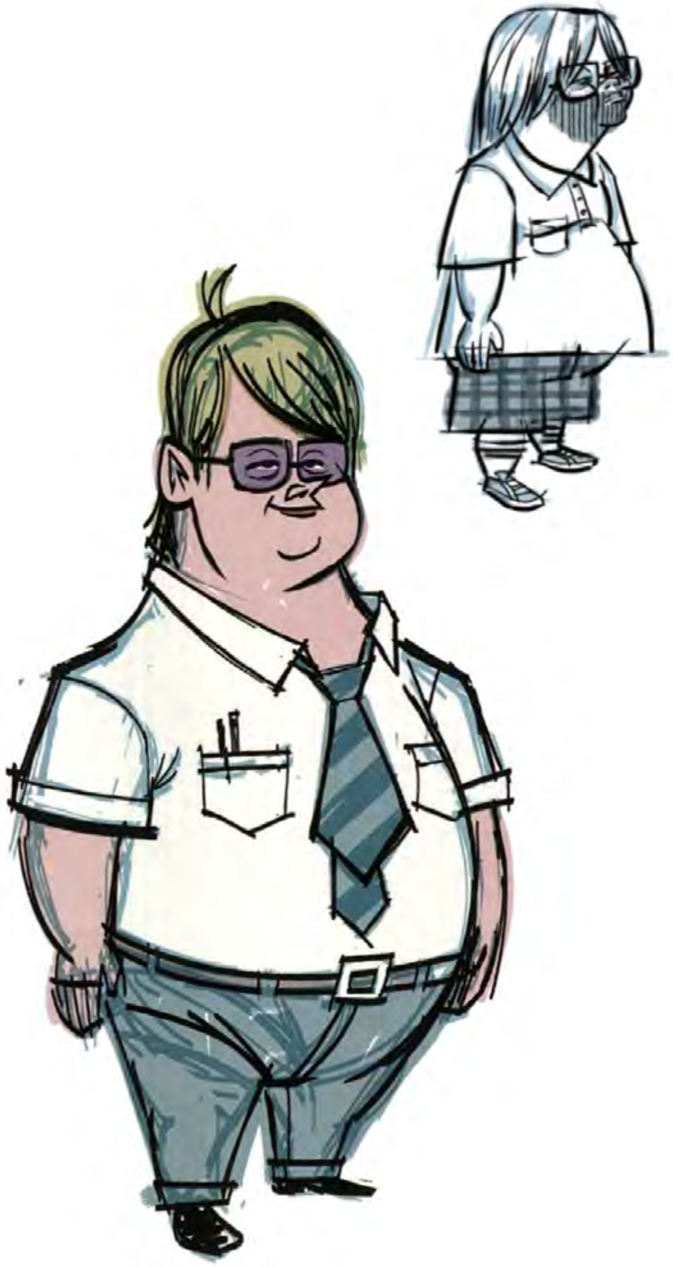
"Hal was always a bit of a schlub," says production designer David James, "and in the first versions of his character design, he was an uber-nerd."

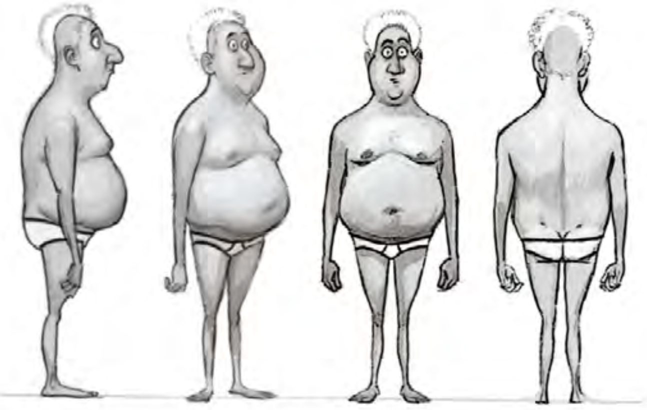
What, though, makes a nerd? Is it the Woody Allen glasses, the pumpkin-shell haircut—a hairstyle once known as a Melvin? Is it the protruding skinny end of a tie, the five o'clock shadow, the pocket protector, the Bermuda shorts? Head of character animation Jason Schleifer suggests that there's something physically thick about Hal: "It's the way he holds his neck and shoulders. We like to think of his torso as almost an inverted pyramid of meat."

Once he's infused with the alien DNA of the late and lamented Metro Man, Hal takes on a new identity he can't even spell properly. As Tighten, the now all-powerful nerd unleashes hitherto unknown panic on Metro City. Where Metro Man was a suave superhero, an effortless crowd pleaser, Tighten is the worst of both him and Hal.

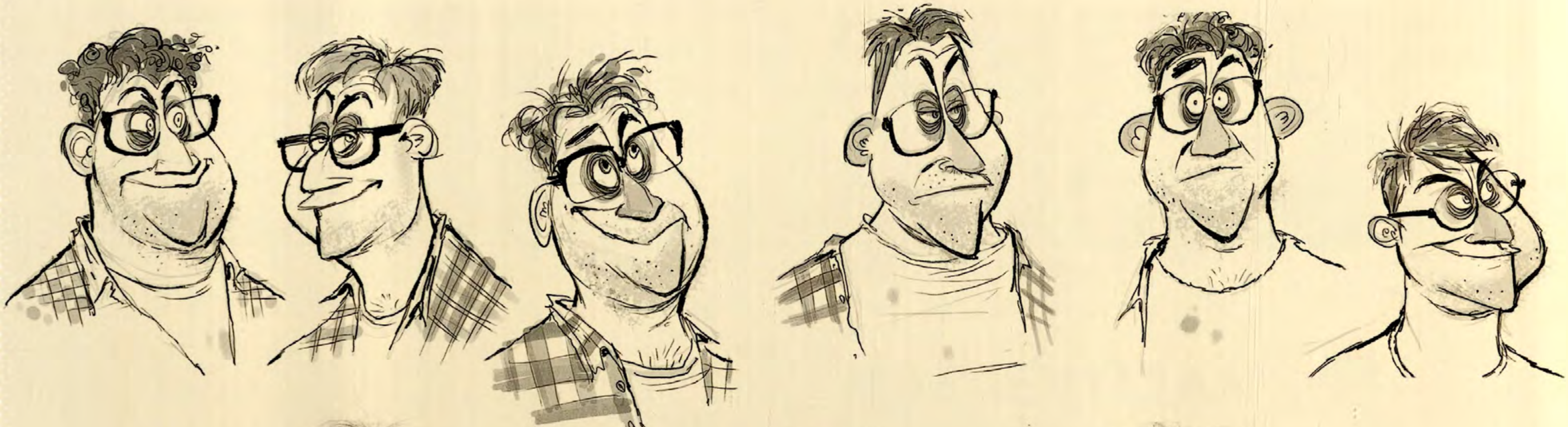
Character designer Craig Kellman drew the transformed Hal with a well-endowed jaw and capped his head with an early version of the famous business-in-the-front, party-in-the back, terry-cloth-sweatbanded mullet of tennis great John McEnroe.

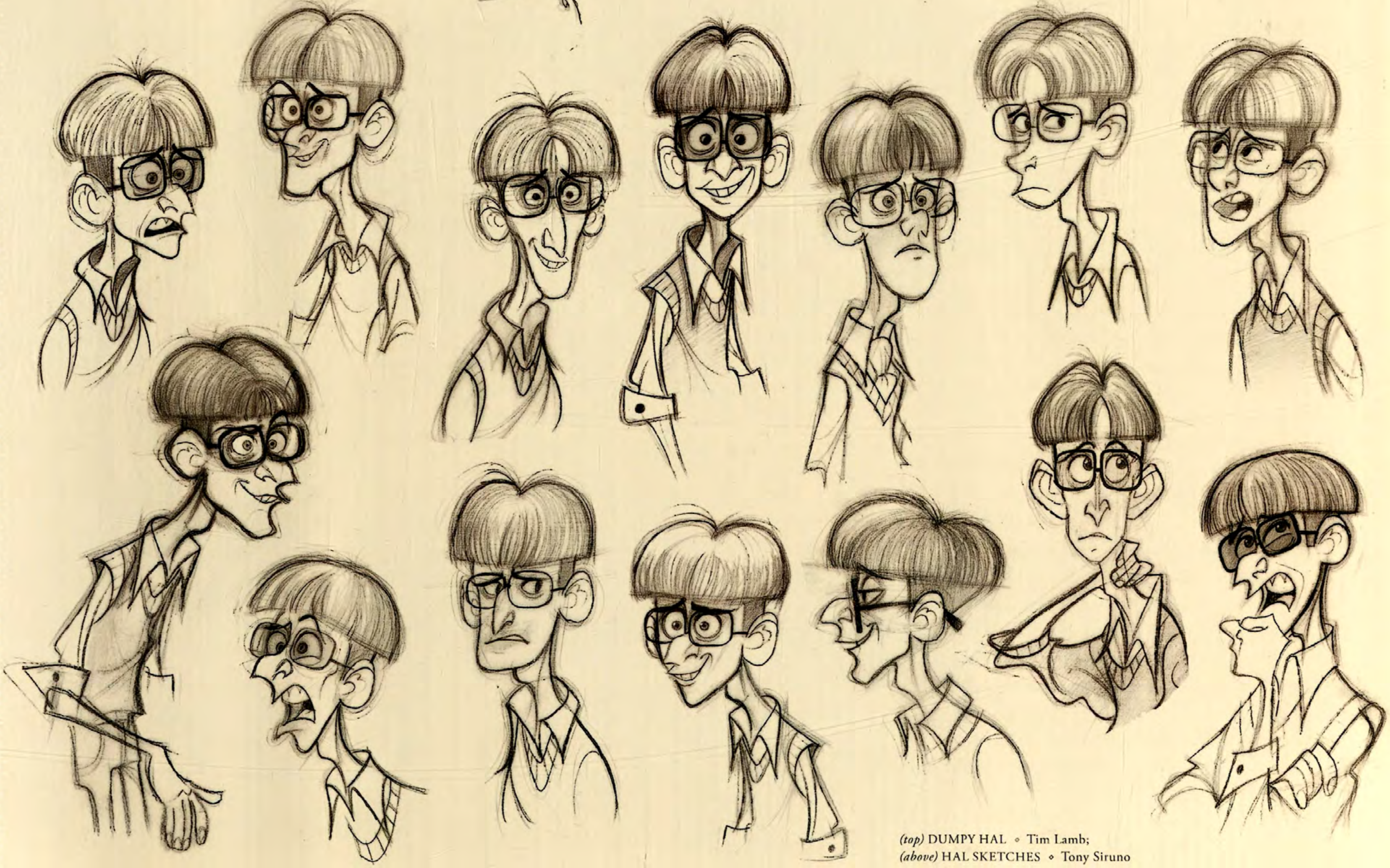
The final version of Tighten has Metro Man's silhouette: the huge shoulders, frequently spotted from below as Tighten also inherits the ability to fly. Unmistakably voiced by Jonah Hill, the Hal we've come to know lives inside this new super body. But despite his sudden strength, Hal is still the same needy schlub he always was. The slight smarminess visible in Metro Man returns here in full force, best seen in art director Tim Lamb's drawings of Hal's alter ego. Lamb depicts an angry, triumphant Tighten bulging with unfeasible muscles. He may have the same size and heft as the protector Metro Man, but Tighten is the superhero as bully, as nightmare. He's a kind of centaur, with the huge arched neck and fetlocks of a draft horse forming parts of this human monster.





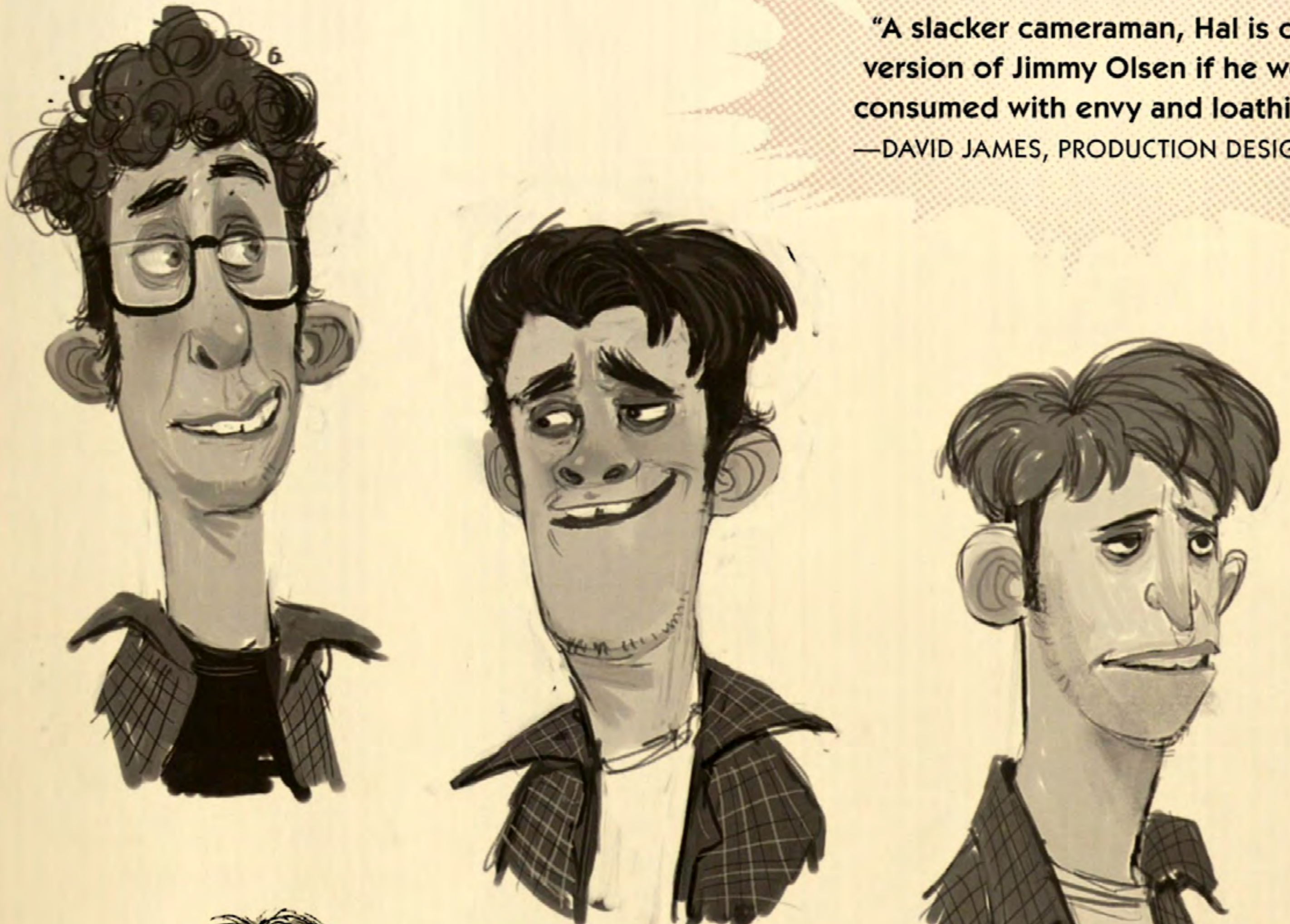
(opposite) TIGHTEN COSTUME • Chin Ko; *(top panel, left to right)* HAL'S ROOM • Rich Daskas; THE DEAL • Tim Lamb; TIGHTEN & ROXANNE IN MOONLIGHT • Travis Koller; *(above left)* HAL • Sean Galloway; *(left)* HAL IN UNDERWEAR • Tim Lamb; *(above)* HAL WITH BELLY • Andy Bialk

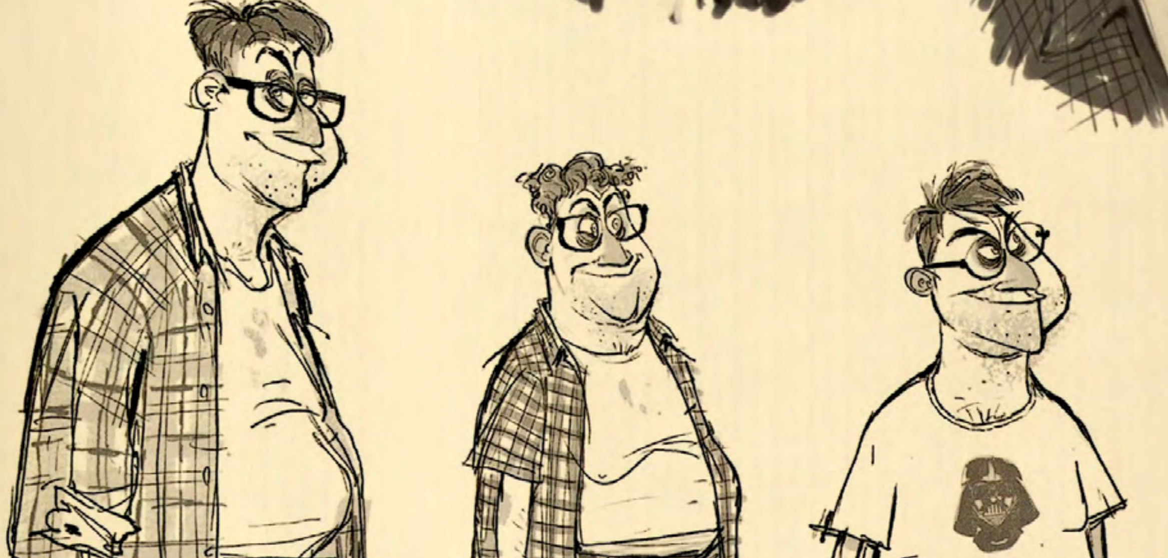


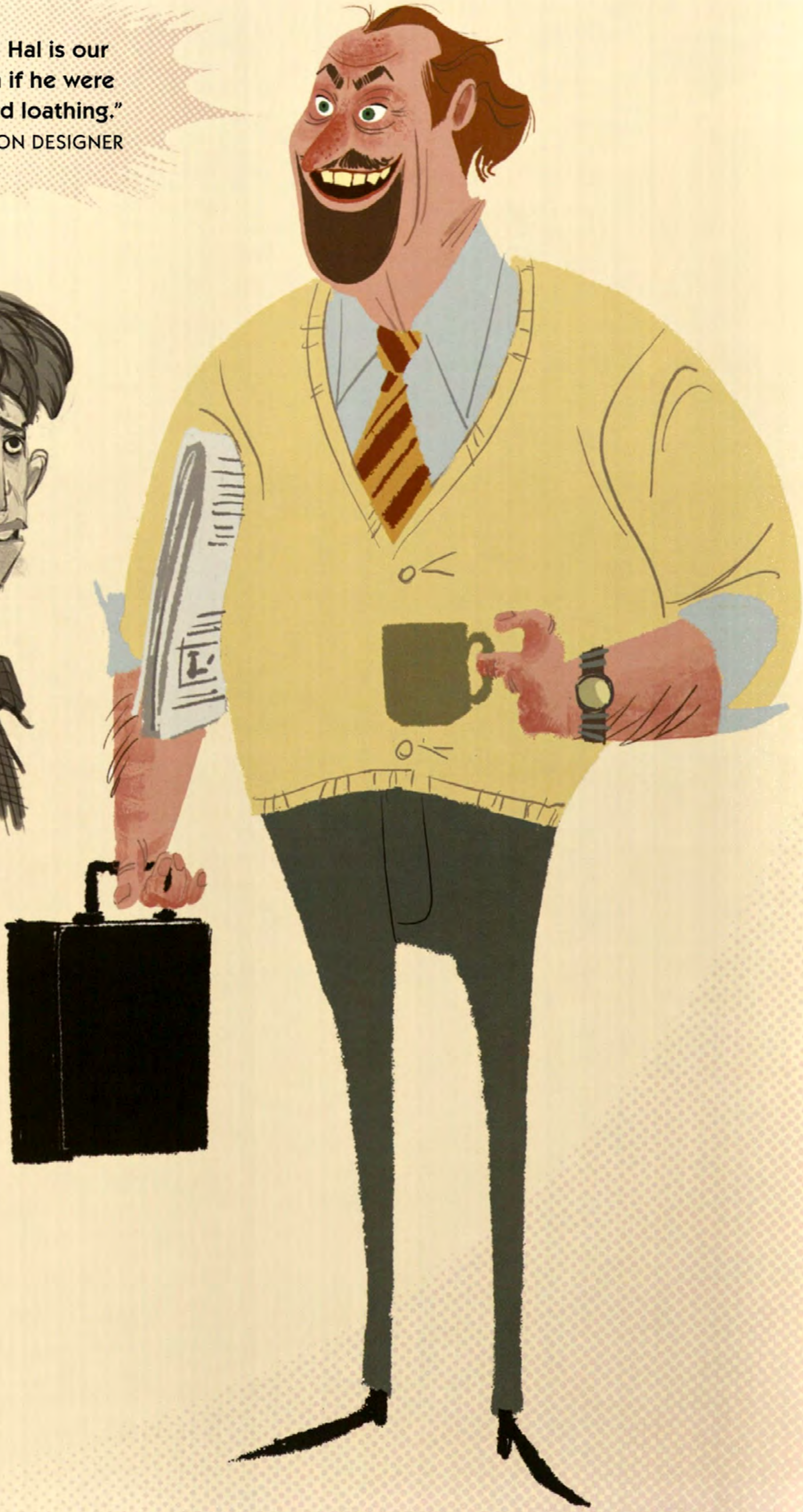


(top) DUMPY HAL ◦ Tim Lamb;
(above) HAL SKETCHES ◦ Tony Siruno

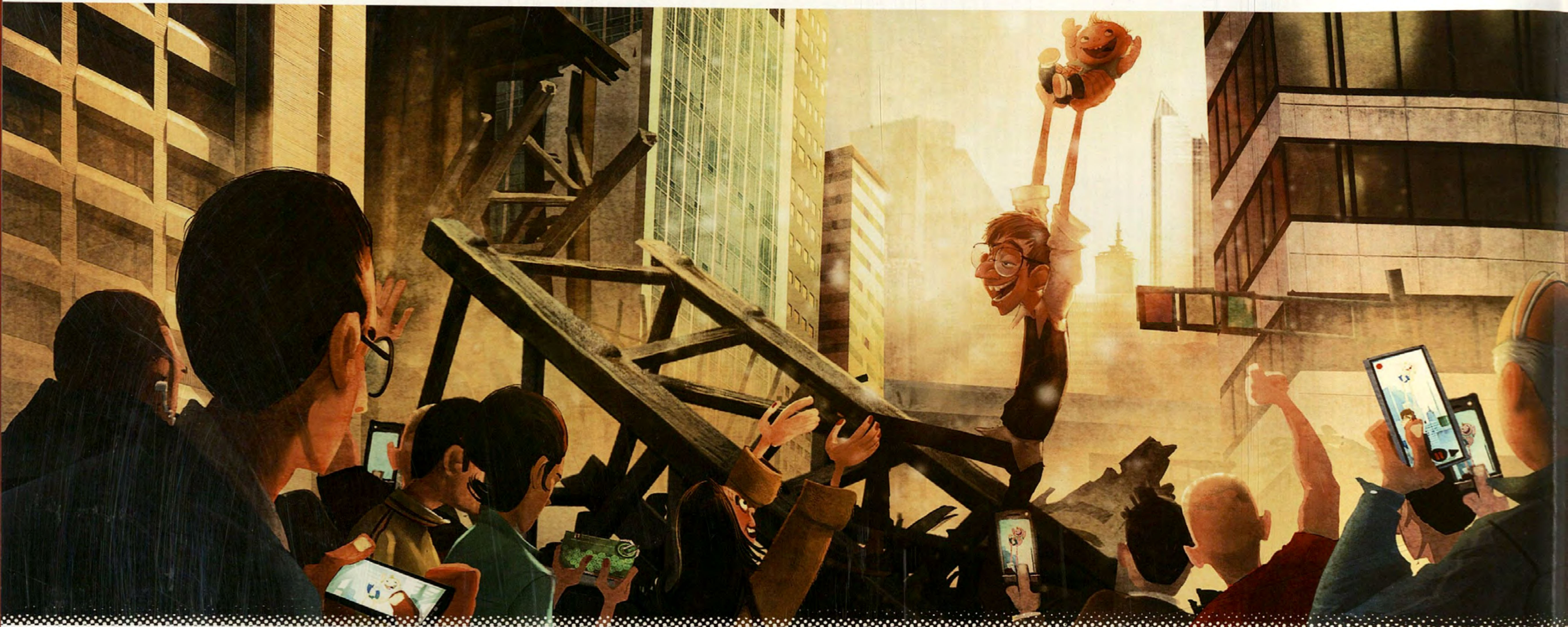
"A slacker cameraman, Hal is our version of Jimmy Olsen if he were consumed with envy and loathing."
—DAVID JAMES, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

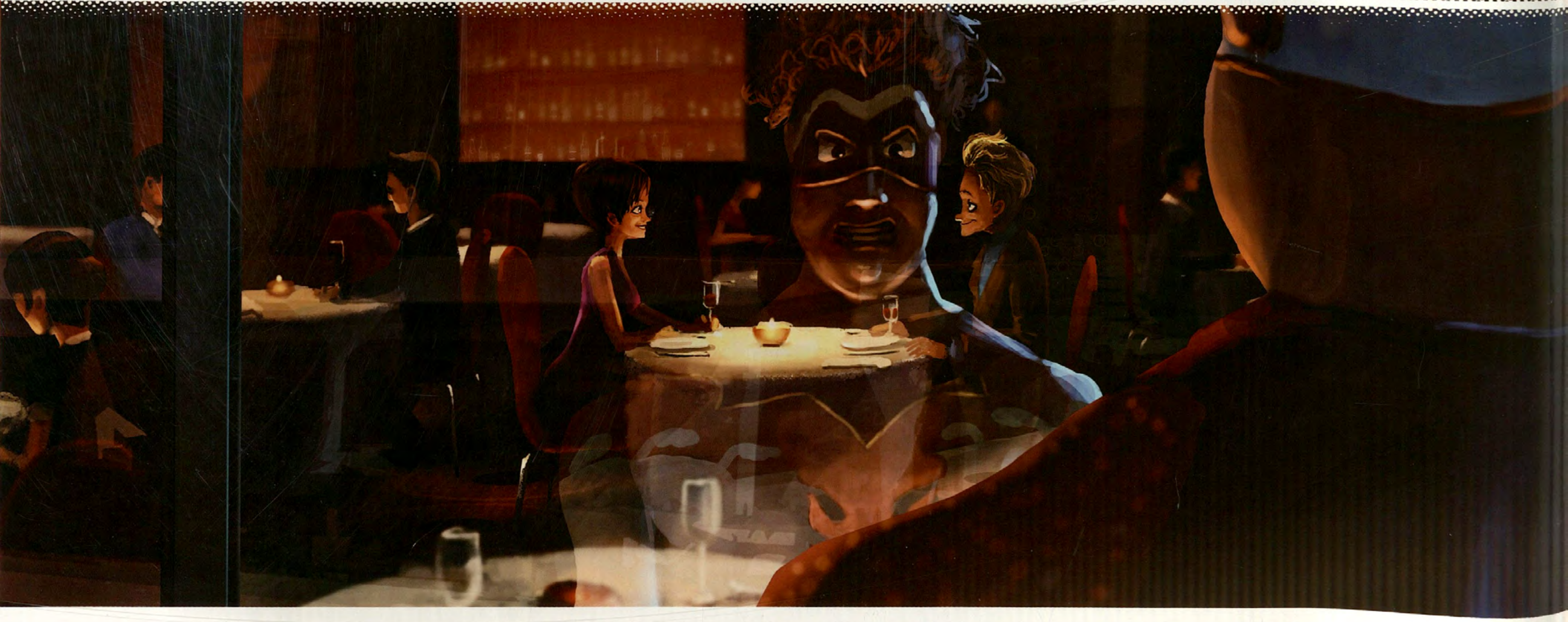


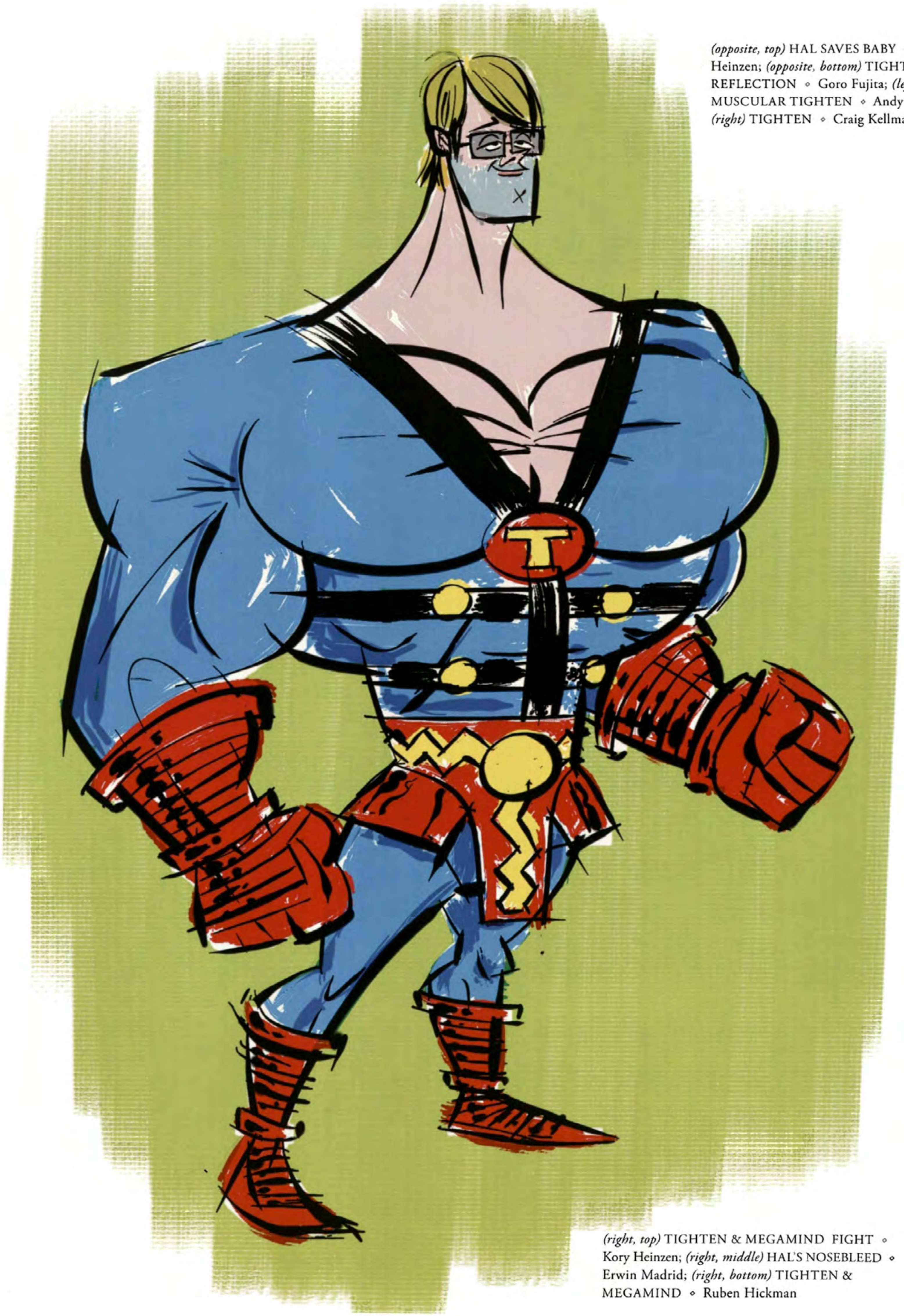




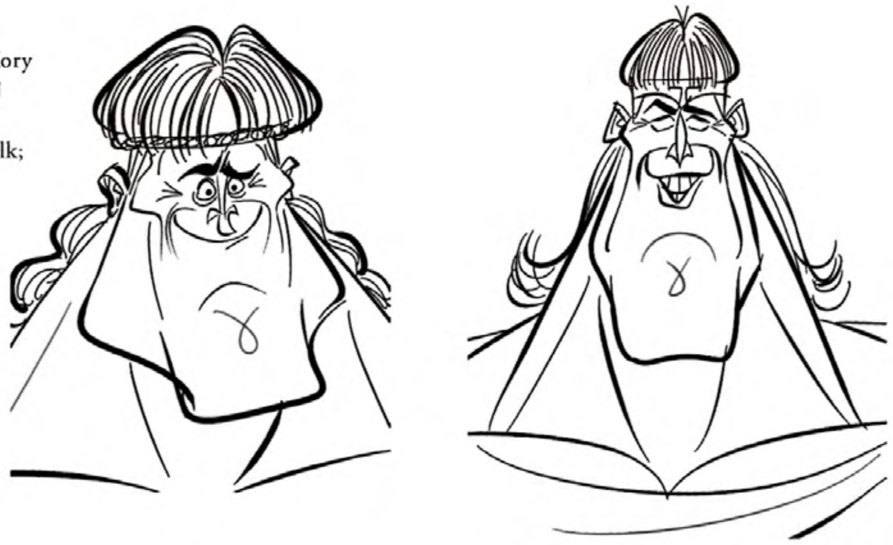
(top) HAL EXPRESSIONS ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(above)* HAL BODY STUDIES ◦ Tim Lamb; *(right)* HAL WITH BRIEFCASE ◦ Andy Schuller



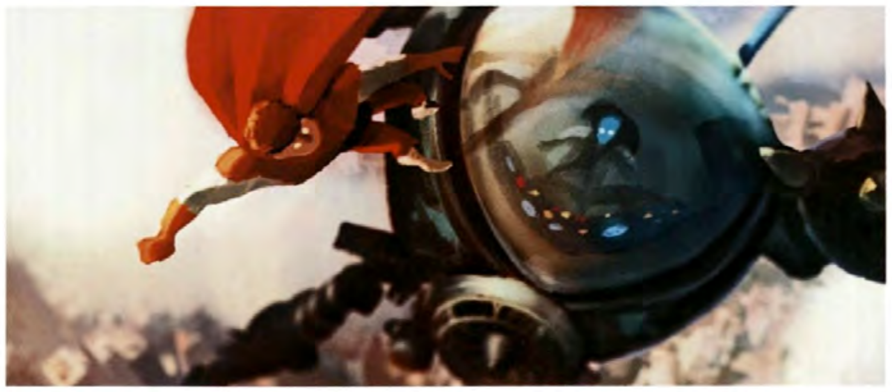


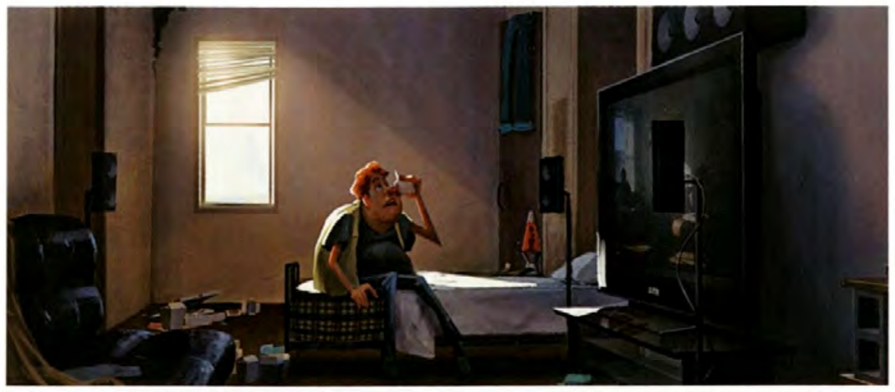


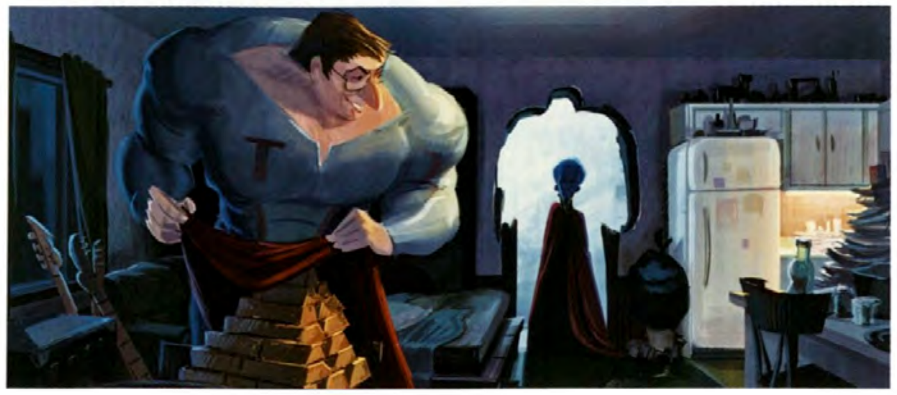
(opposite, top) HAL SAVES BABY ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(opposite, bottom)* TIGHTEN REFLECTION ◦ Goro Fujita; *(left)* MUSCULAR TIGHTEN ◦ Andy Bialk; *(right)* TIGHTEN ◦ Craig Kellman



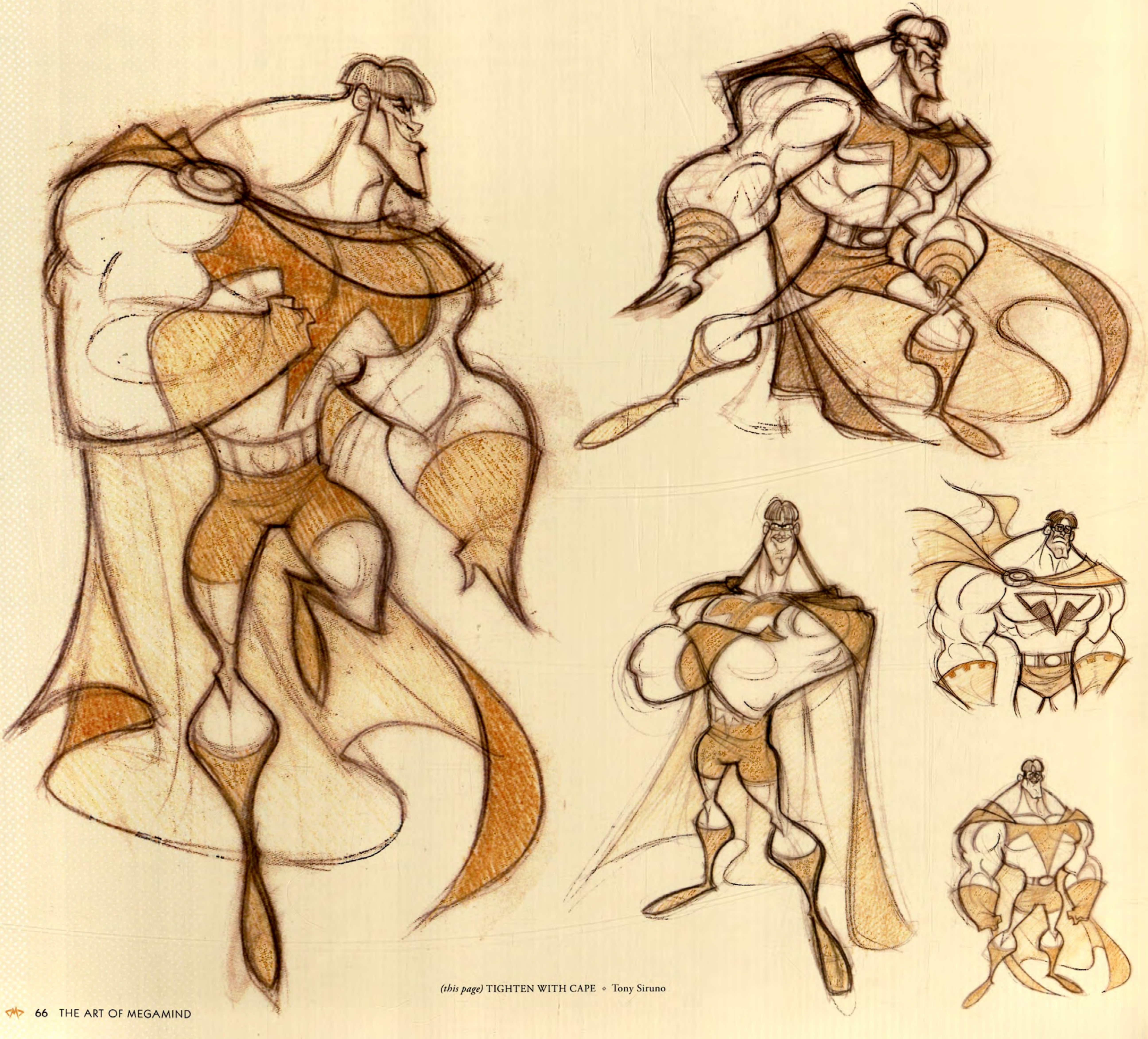
> **"Tighten has superpowers and the raging hormones of a teenager. And when Roxanne breaks his heart, he doesn't know how to handle it."** —JASON SCHLEIFER, HEAD OF CHARACTER ANIMATION



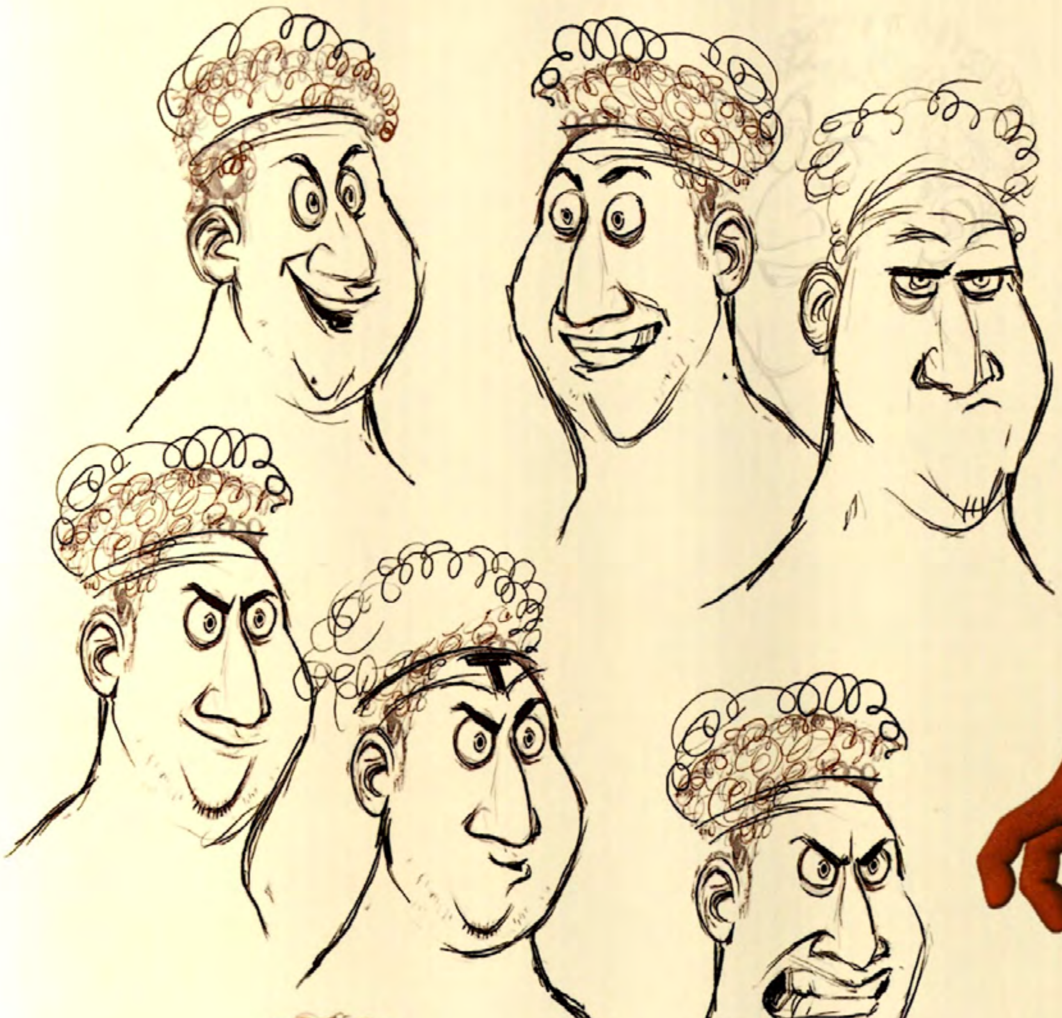


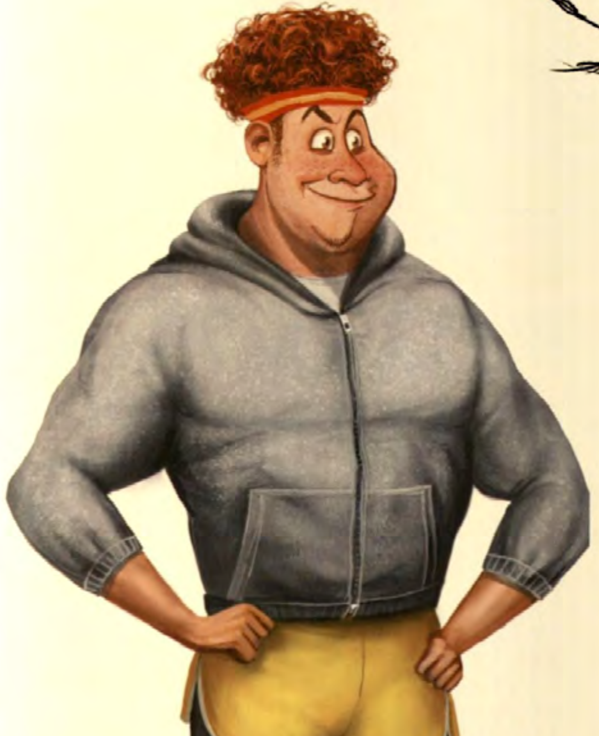


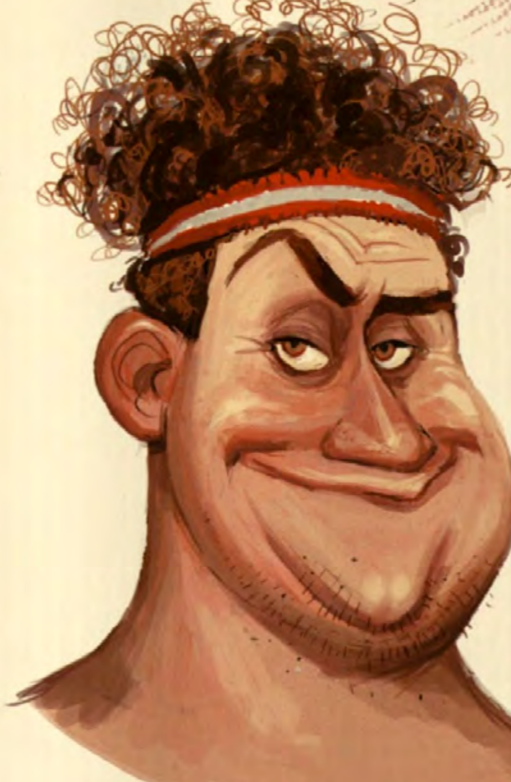
(right, top) TIGHTEN & MEGAMIND FIGHT ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(right, middle)* HAL'S NOSEBLEED ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(right, bottom)* TIGHTEN & MEGAMIND ◦ Ruben Hickman



(this page) TIGHTEN WITH CAPE ◦ Tony Siruno

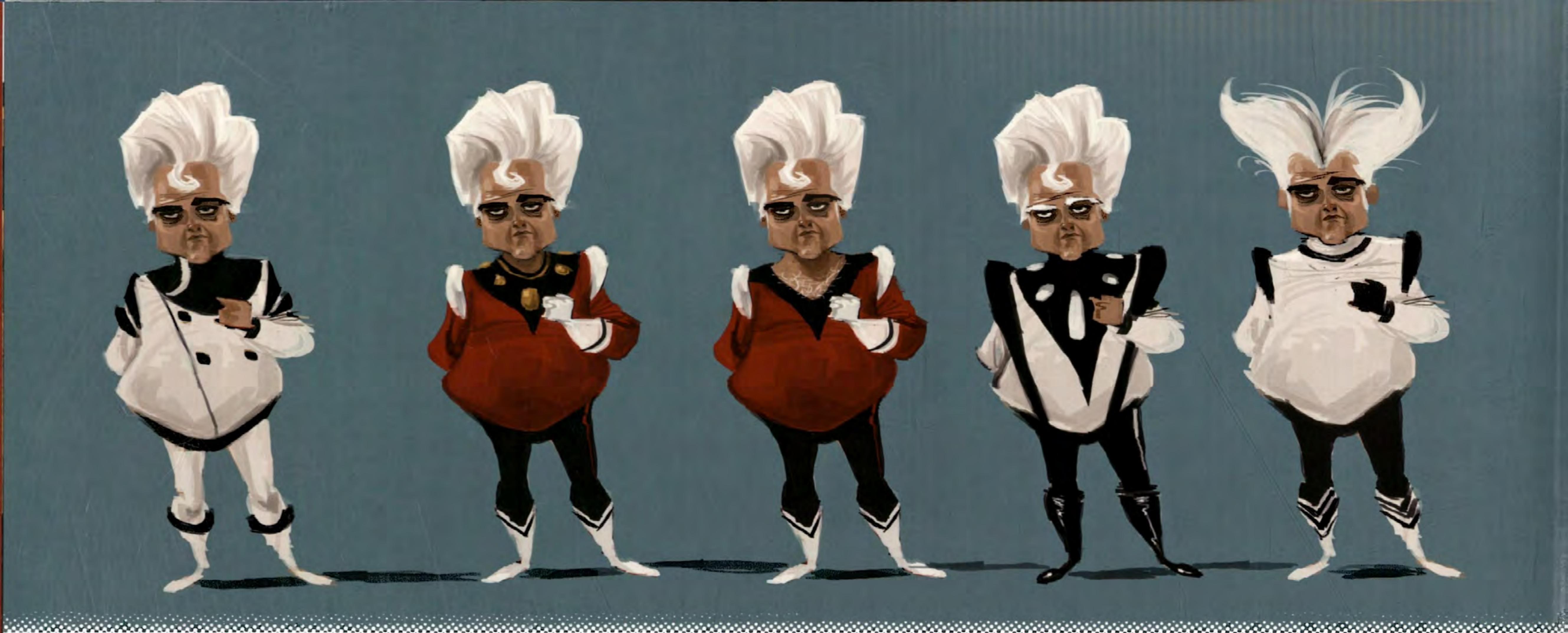




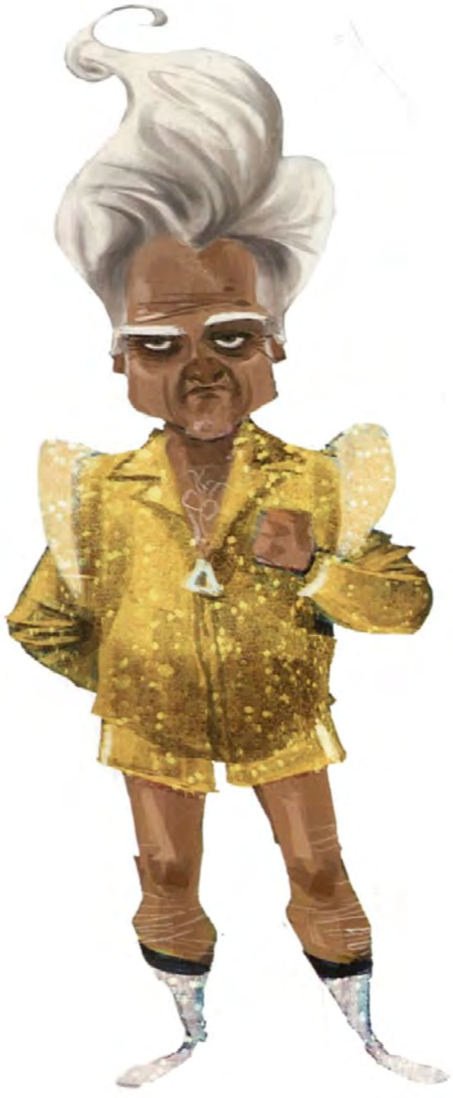


"Hal's the guy who wants to take the easy route on everything."
—DENISE CASCINO, PRODUCER

(top left) TIGHTEN EXPRESSION STUDIES ◦ Tim Lamb; *(far left)* TIGHTEN IN TRAINING COSTUME ◦ Chin Ko; *(left)* TIGHTEN STUDY ◦ Tim Lamb; *(above)* CG RENDER ◦ DreamWorks Animation

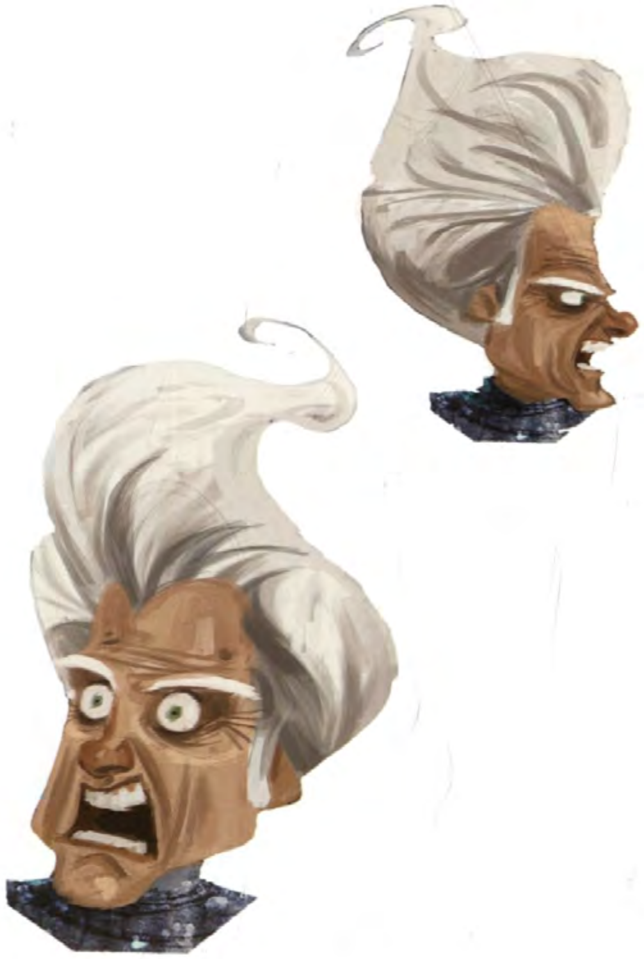


SPACE DAD



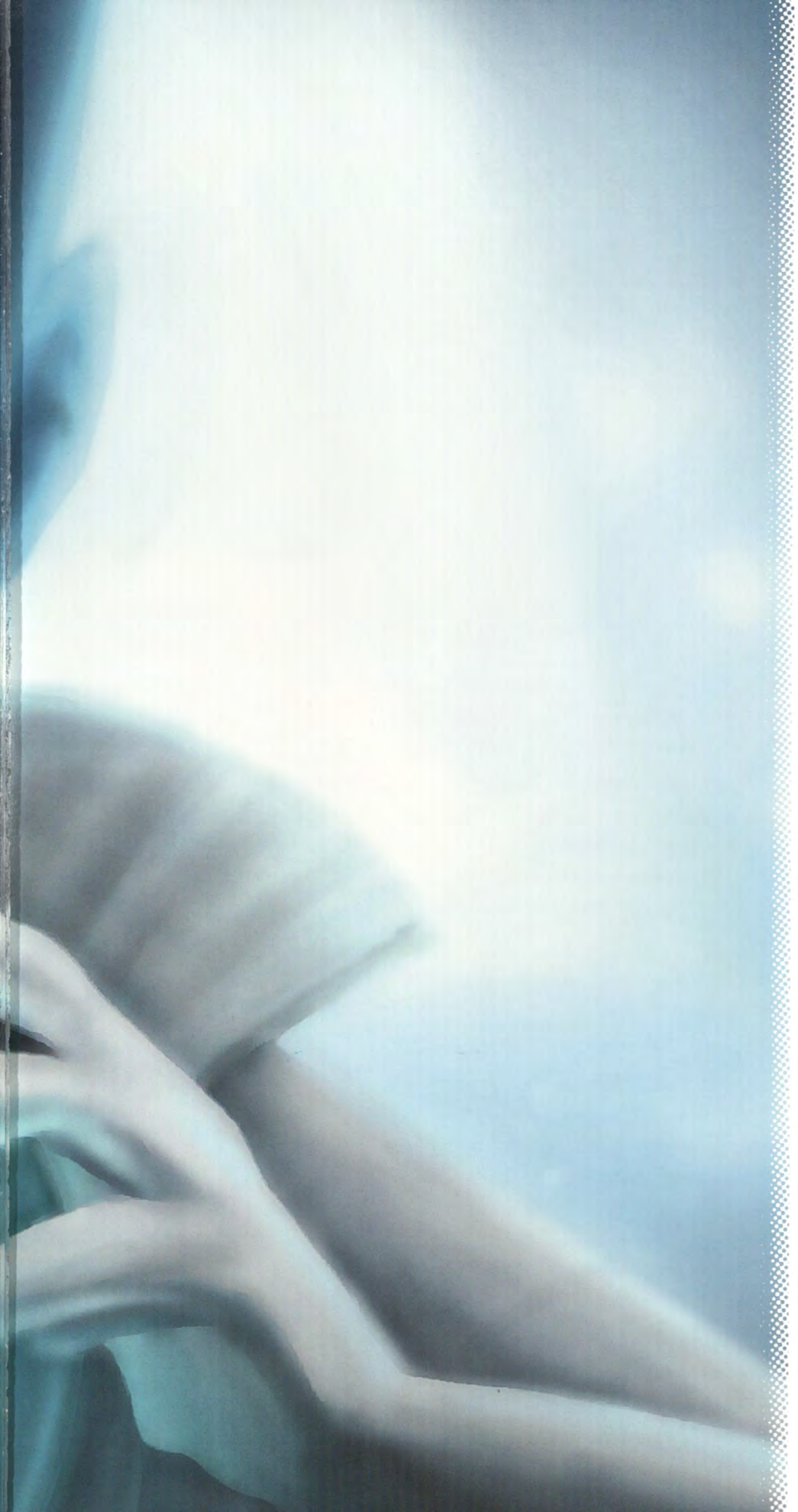
In disguise as Space Dad, Megamind urges Hal to immediately fill the void Metro Man left behind; and as Tighten, Hal learns the substance of superheroing, but not the style—and certainly not the integrity. Early designs explored the idea that Megamind would disguise himself as a parody of Pat Morita's Mr. Miyagi from the four *Karate Kid* movies of 1984–94.

Ultimately, however, the filmmakers chose a more generic father figure as a model. Character designer Devin Crane conceived of making Space Dad a cartoon tribute to Marlon Brando's most lucrative acting gig—portraying Jor-El, of the planet Krypton, in the 1978 version of *Superman*, starring Christopher Reeve. "For me, Space Dad just had to be all white hair, as big as we could make it," adds director Tom McGrath.



(top) SPACE DAD COSTUME LINEUP ◦ Devin Crane; *(left)* SPACE DAD COSTUME ◦ Devin Crane; *(above)* SPACE DAD EXPRESSIONS ◦ Devin Crane; *(opposite)* HOLE IN THE WALL ◦ Goro Fujita

Kiss the Cook



"Here's your binky.
You are destined for greatness."
—MEGAMIND'S FATHER

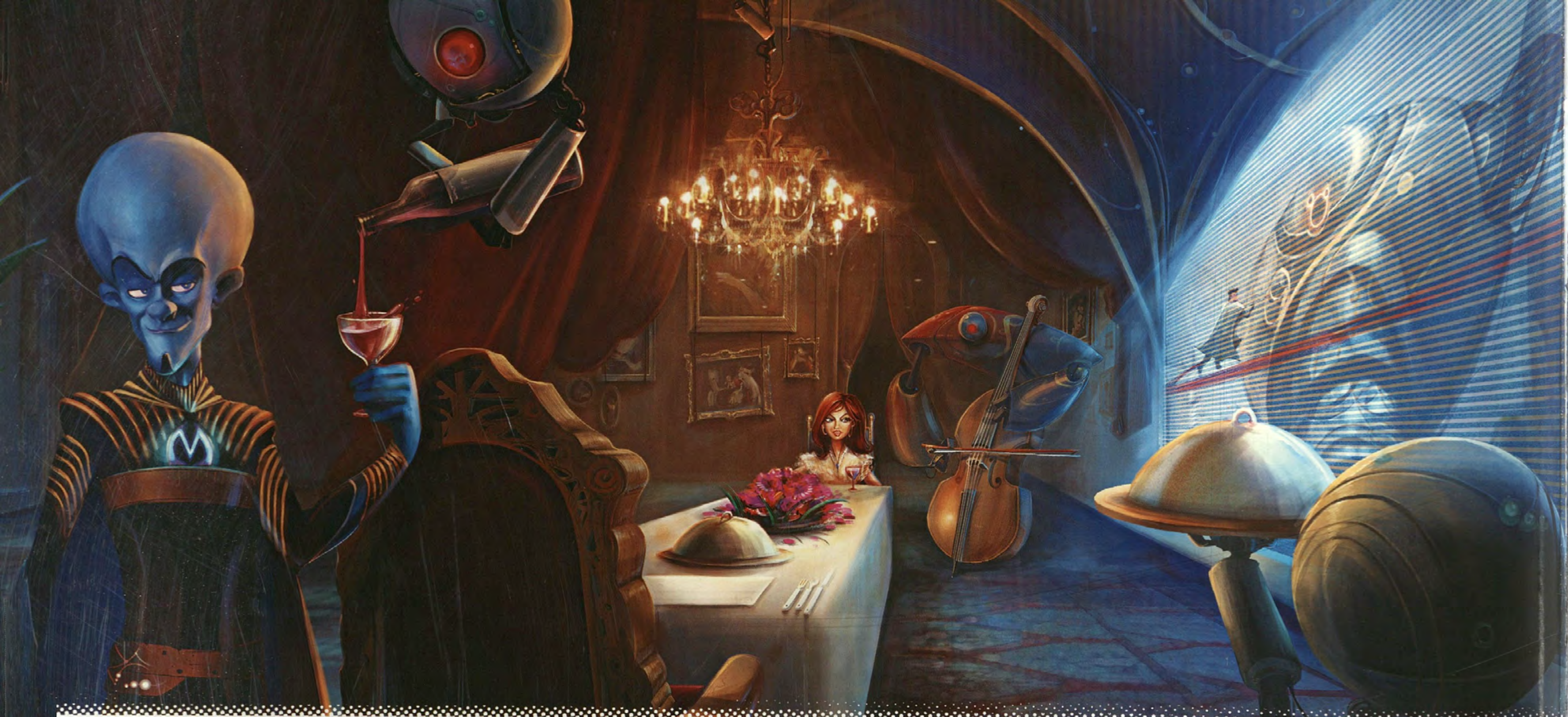
MEGAMIND'S PARENTS

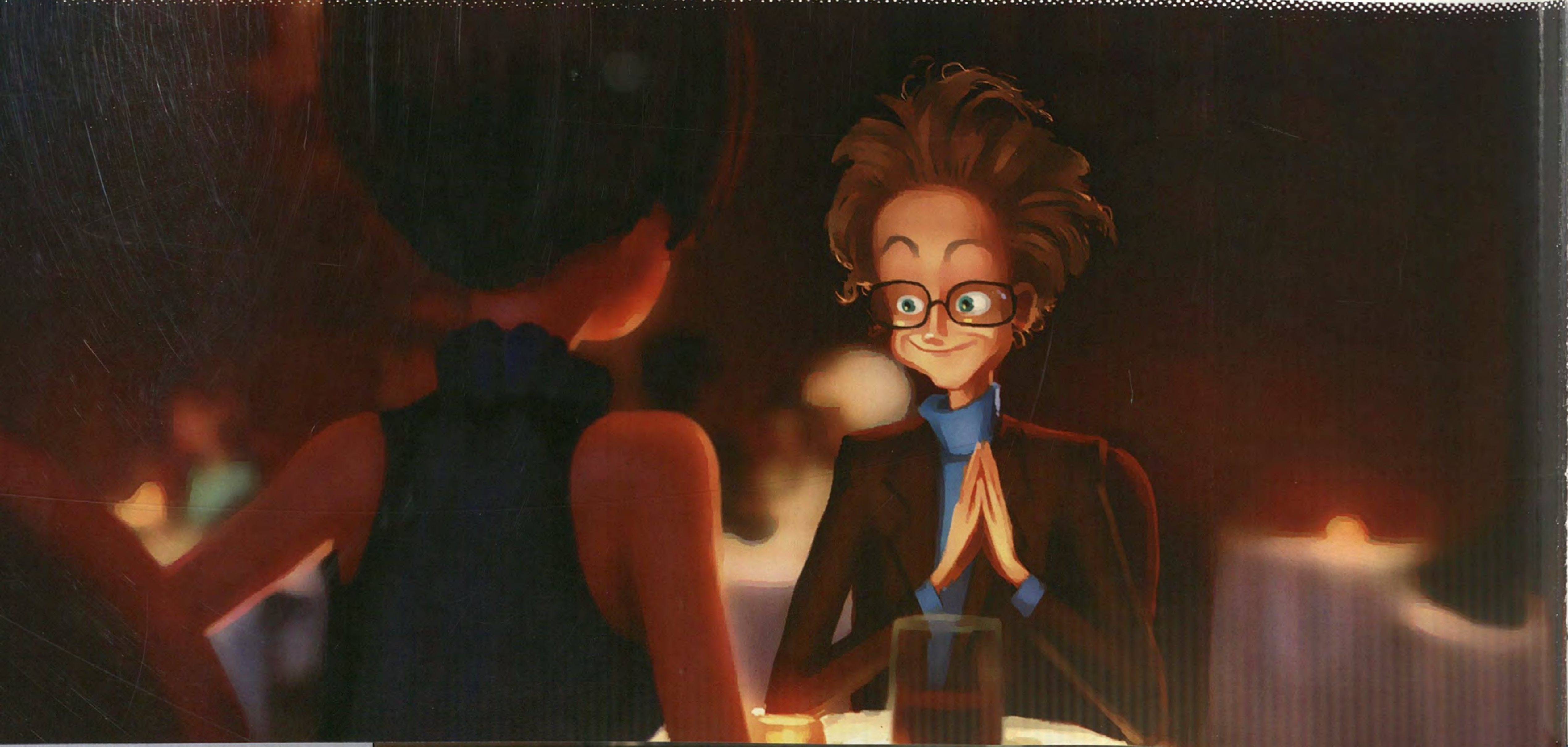
The eight-day-old infant Megamind is, as he's the first to admit, "the last survivor of a doomed planet." Leaving the Glaupunk Quadrant at the same time as the infant Metro Man, Megamind rockets to Earth and receives a chilly reception. The rivalry between these survivors begins early, as they arrive in separate space capsules. "That's the day I met Mr. Goody-Two-Shoes," Megamind recalls. The selfless act of sacrifice by Megamind's parents is viewed through a similarly jaundiced perspective. The way he tells it, his parents "couldn't wait to get me out of the house."

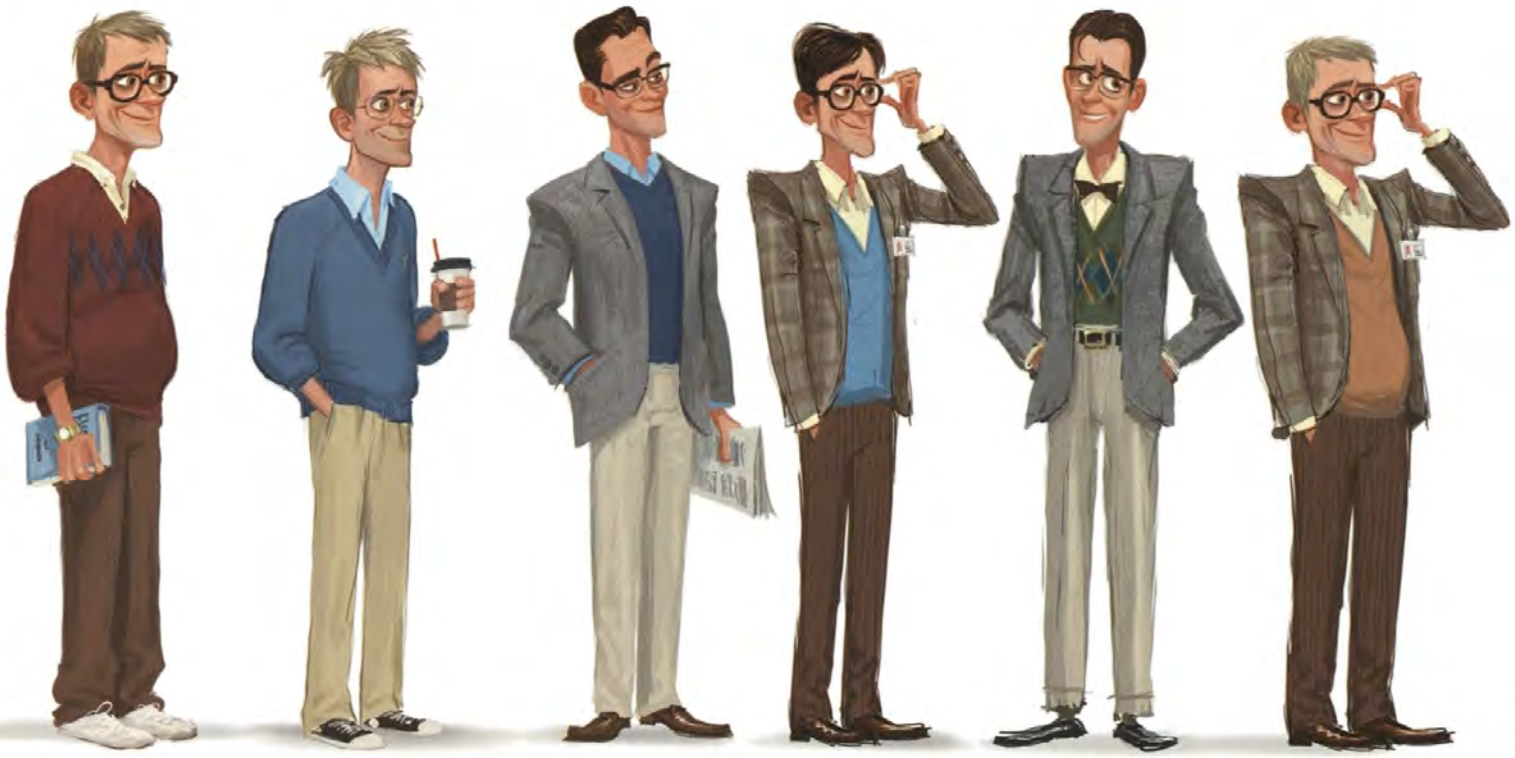
As seen in art director Tim Lamb's sketches, though, the opposite is true of Megamind's parents; they're not uncaring. "We had some early concepts that aren't in the current script," he says. "They have the trademark supersized cranium and spindly bodies. Ultimately, we've decided to mask them a bit."

Visually, the final designs for Megamind's parents aren't meant to draw any attention away from the crisis of an exploding planet and from the fostering of their child.

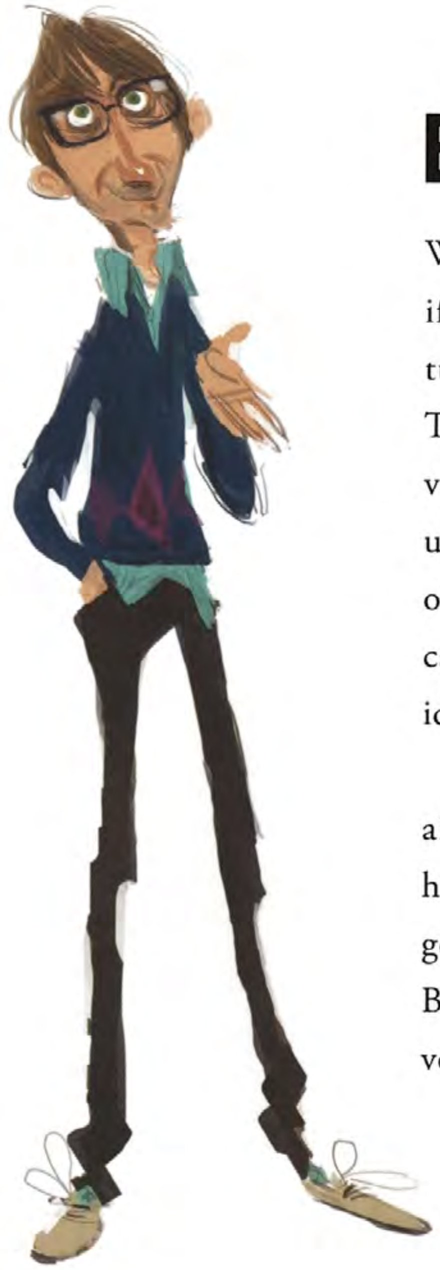
(left) MEGAMIND'S PARENTS
WITH MINION • Chin Ko







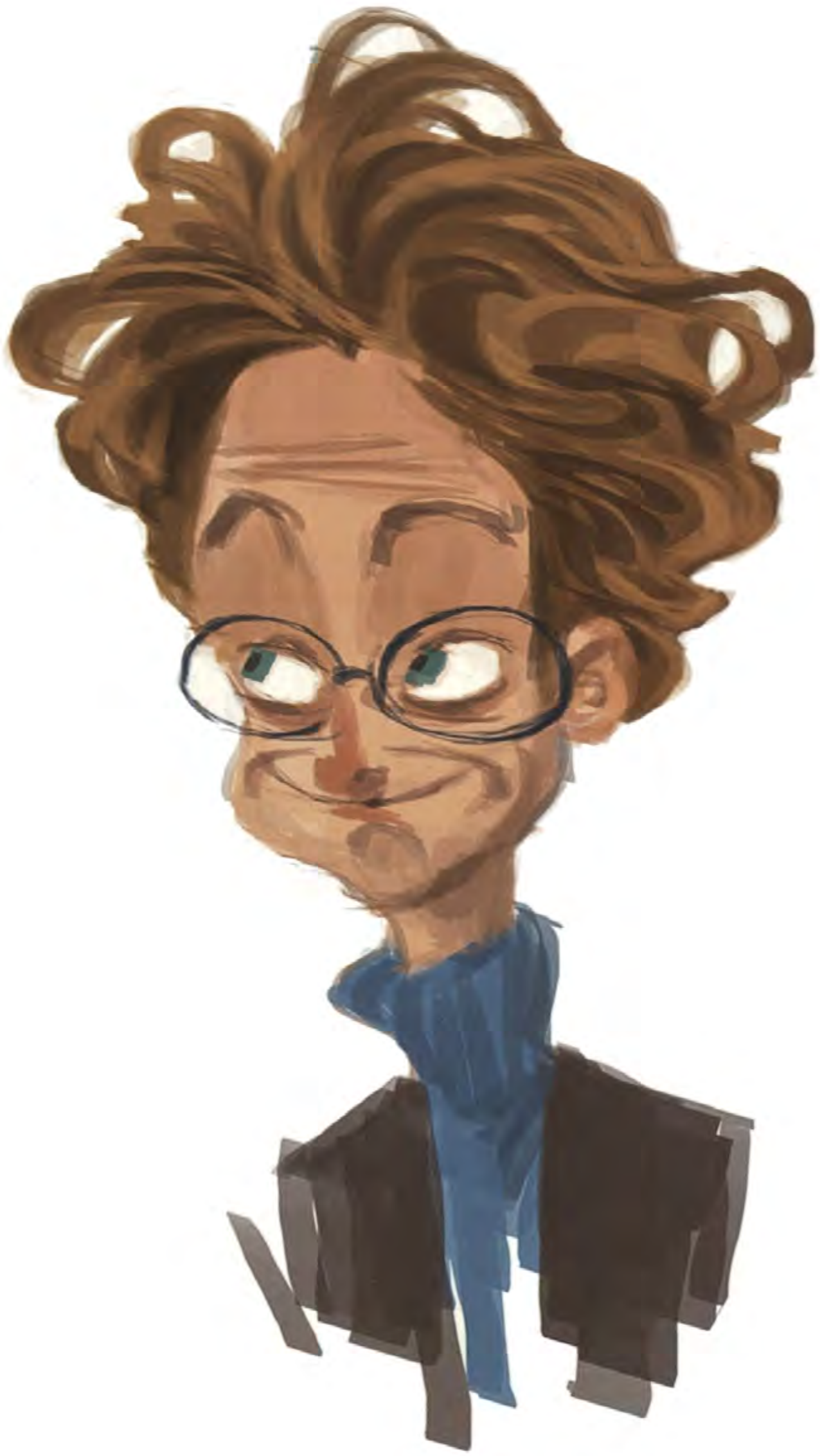
> "Bernard is the man Megamind wishes he was. He can be himself behind this mask."
> —TOM MCGRATH, DIRECTOR



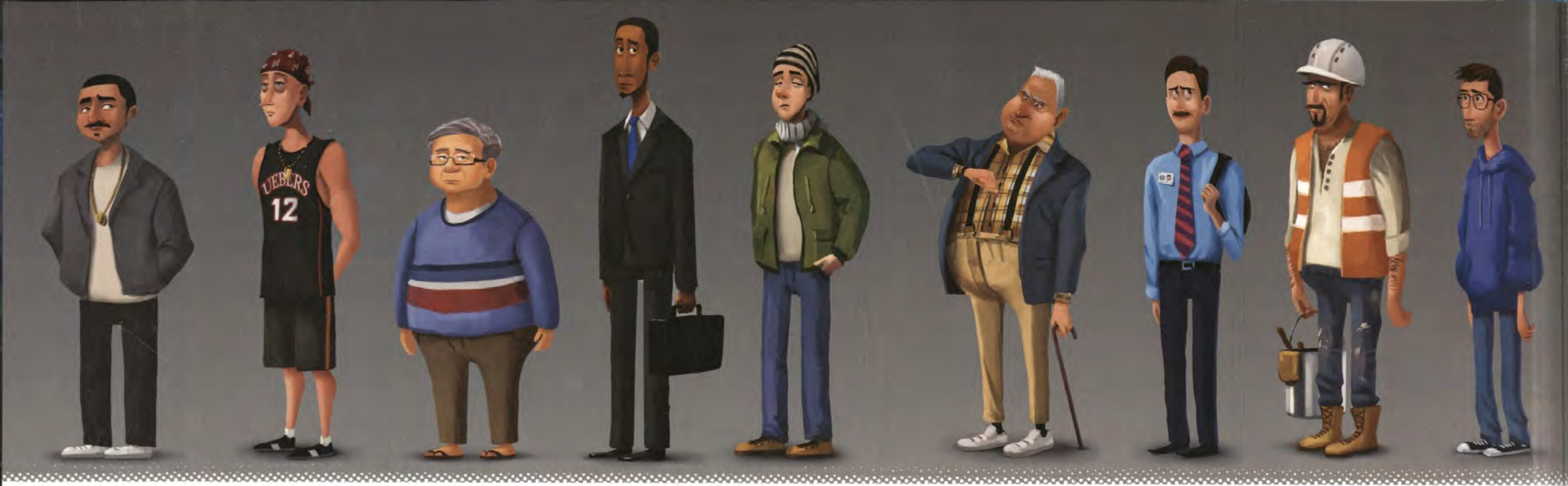
BERNARD

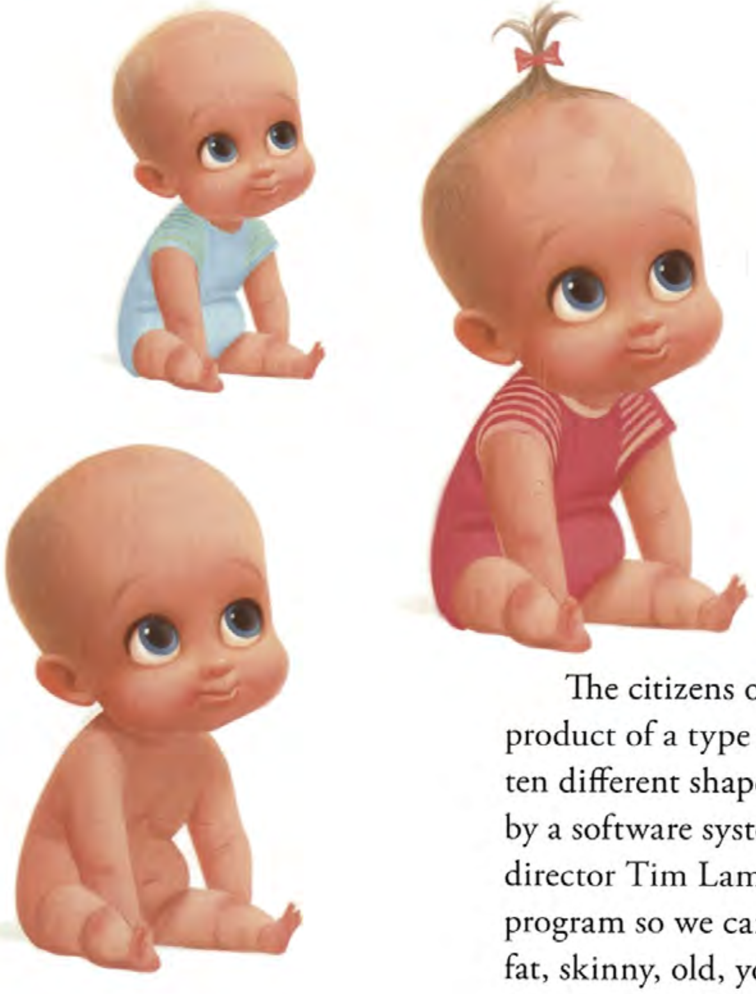
Why would the world's greatest villain pretend to be an ordinary if somewhat oddly intense man—a civilian without a cape or costume? To make the love story in Megamind work, notes director Tom McGrath, "we had to have Roxanne and Megamind get involved with one another. In the script, Megamind was in makeup. But we thought it would be better if he took on the identity of someone else. It gave them a reason to be together. Megamind can be himself behind this mask. When he puts on the Bernard identity, he can commiserate with Roxanne."

Production designer David James adds, "The idea we were aiming for was that Bernard was not much of a hunk. Bernard, in his original inception, is a bit of an angry milquetoast. We only get to see the real him for two lines or so. When Megamind takes Bernard's image, it proves that Megamind, this relatively unsavory guy, can almost be Cyrano de Bergerac."



(opposite, top) MEGAMIND & ROXANNE AT DINNER ◦ Chin Ko; *(opposite, bottom)* BERNARD & ROXANNE AT DINNER ◦ Bryan Lashelle; *(top)* BERNARD STUDIES ◦ Tim Lamb; *(left)* EARLY BERNARD ◦ Devin Crane; *(above)* BERNARD ◦ Devin Crane





(top) METRO CITY MEN LINEUP ◦ Goro Fujita; *(above)* METRO CITY BABY ◦ Tim Lamb; *(opposite, top)* METRO CITY WOMEN LINEUP ◦ Goro Fujita; *(opposite, bottom)* METRO CITY KIDS ◦ Goro Fujita

site,

CITIZENS OF METRO CITY

The contemporarily dressed citizens of Metro City are everyday people: un-super civilians of assorted sizes, age, races, and economic classes. Designed with fairly realistic shapes and faces, their number-one vocation in *Megamind* is plain: they're spectators.

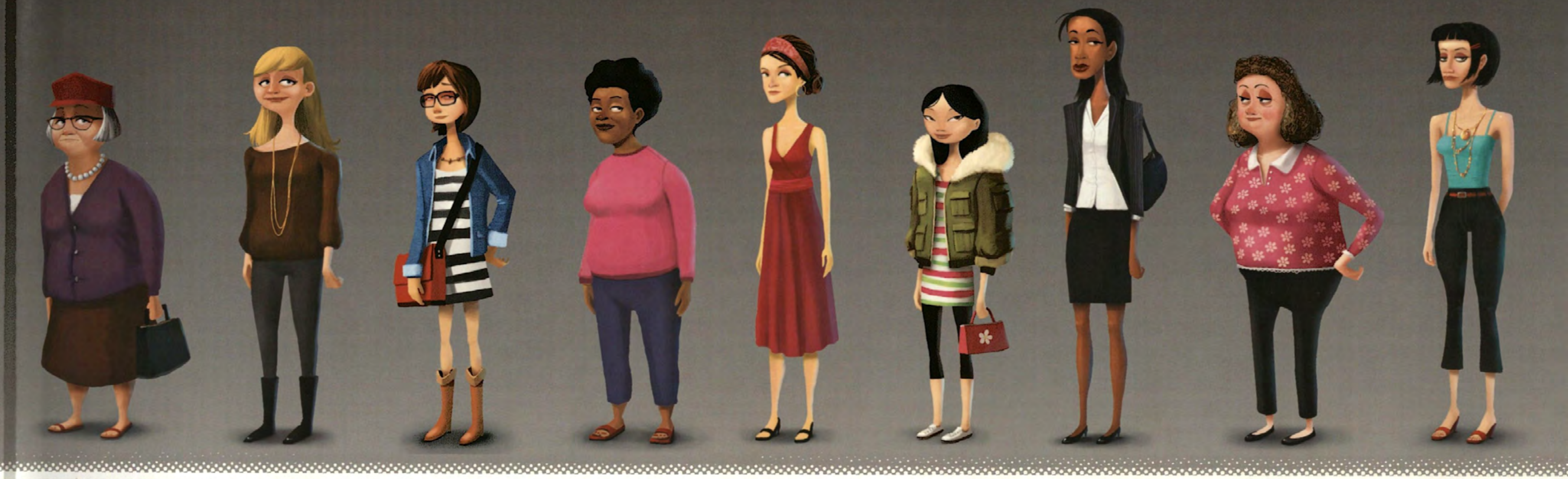
Thanks to his disguise generator, Megamind can infiltrate them to gather information or improvise a quick getaway. In one escape, he assumes the identity of his longtime foe, the jail warden: the mustached, middle-aged adversary with five o'clock shadow who has been ruining Megamind's life since he arrived on Earth.

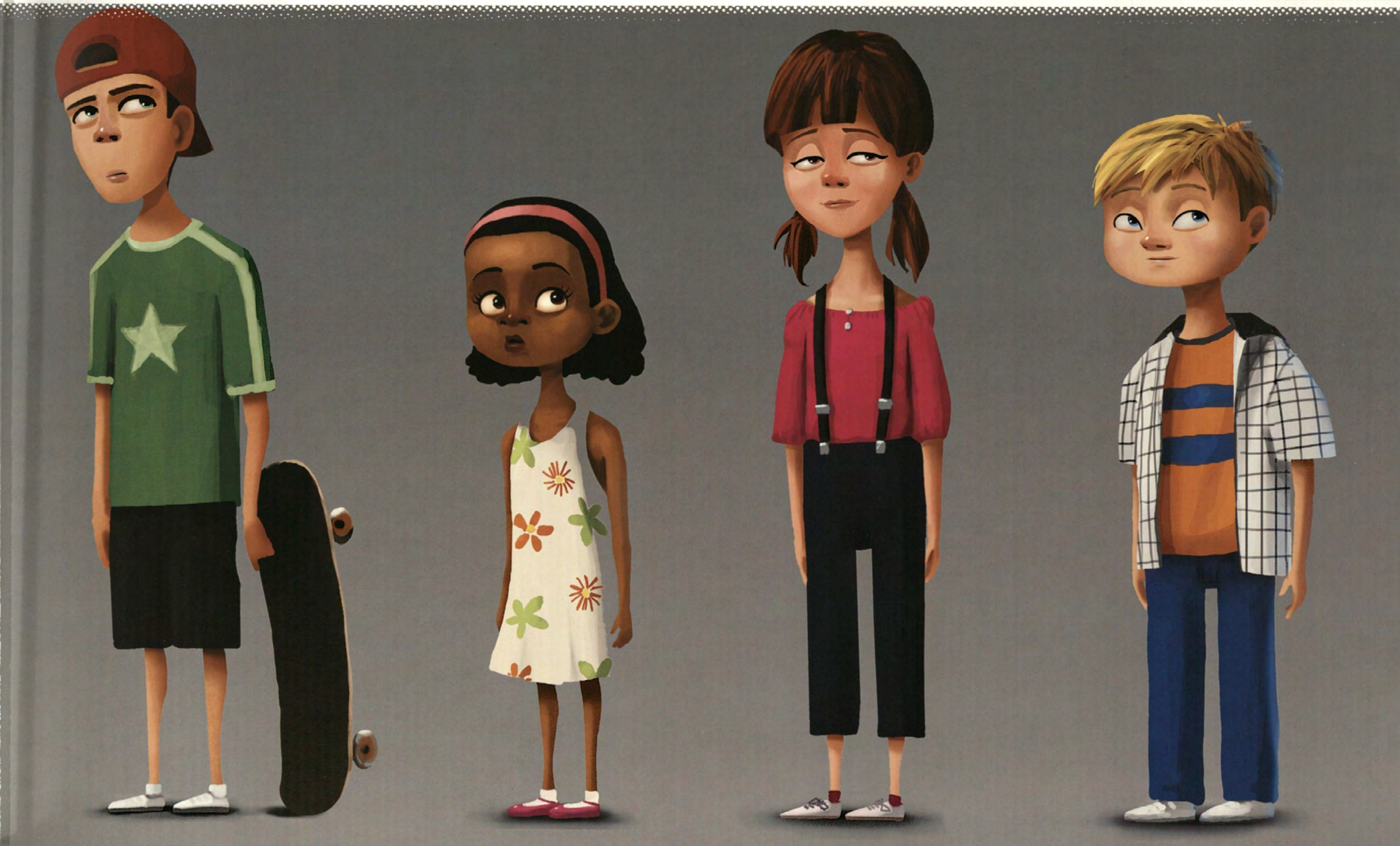
The citizens of Metro City themselves are the product of a type of generator, being an amalgam of ten different shapes and ten different heads distributed by a software system designed to create crowds. Art director Tim Lamb comments, "It's an automated program so we can model different bodies—tall, thin, fat, skinny, old, young—and we can potato-head the different heads on them back and forth."

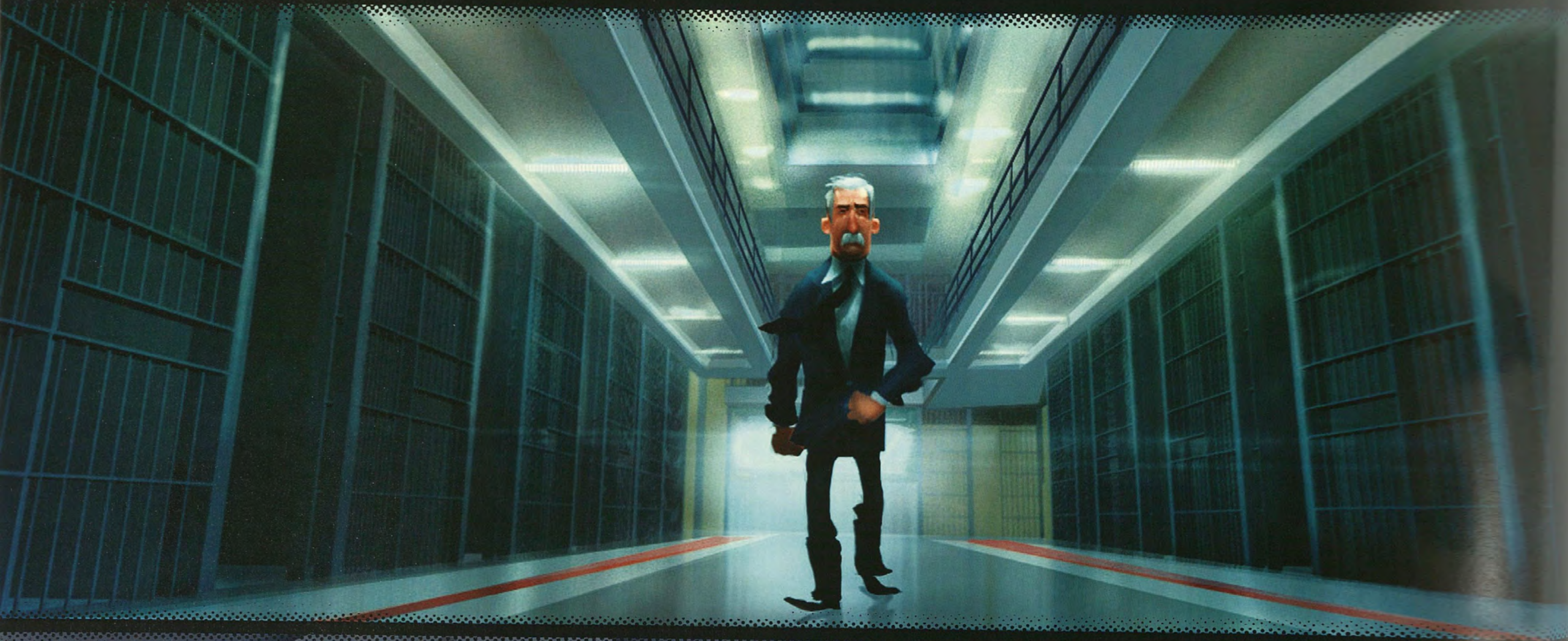
As our villain is mostly a menace in his own mind, no ordinary citizen fears him all that much—especially the ones who know him best, such as his frequent hostage Roxanne. After the ceremonial matching of wits with Metro Man, Megamind is usually hustled back to jail, where he presumably belongs; it's the end of the show, and everyone goes home happy.

Head of character animation Jason Schleifer says the citizens of Metro City are sounding boards to these scripted battles: "They love the whole hero/villain thing. When the bad guy wins, they're thrown for a loop. This has never happened before. They're scared. Everyone retreats. Then Tighten appears, and they start to feel like everything's back to normal. When Tighten turns out to be worse, that's when we show actual fear and pandemonium."

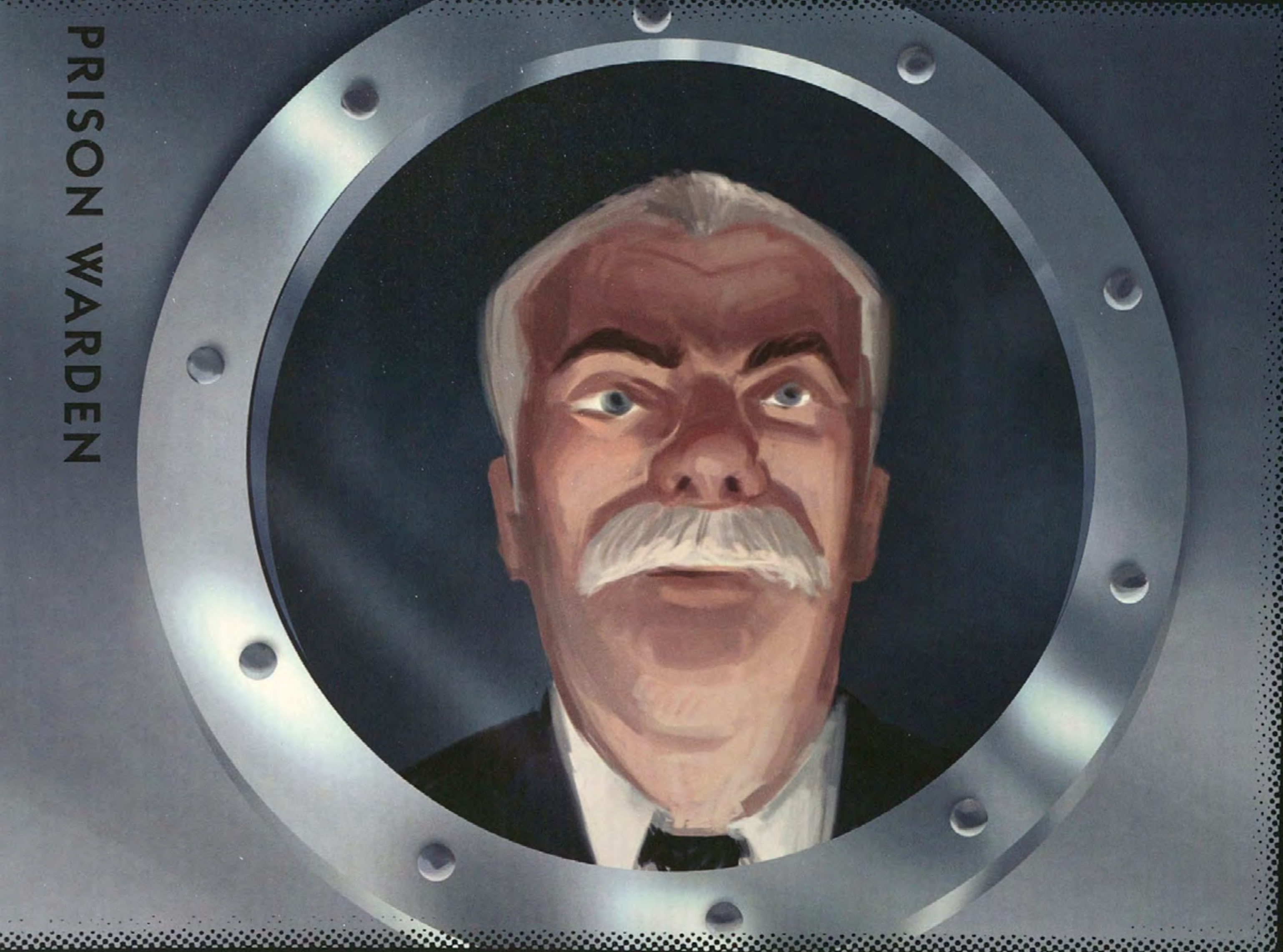
What was once a safe form of public theater—safe enough for babies, even—becomes genuine chaos.

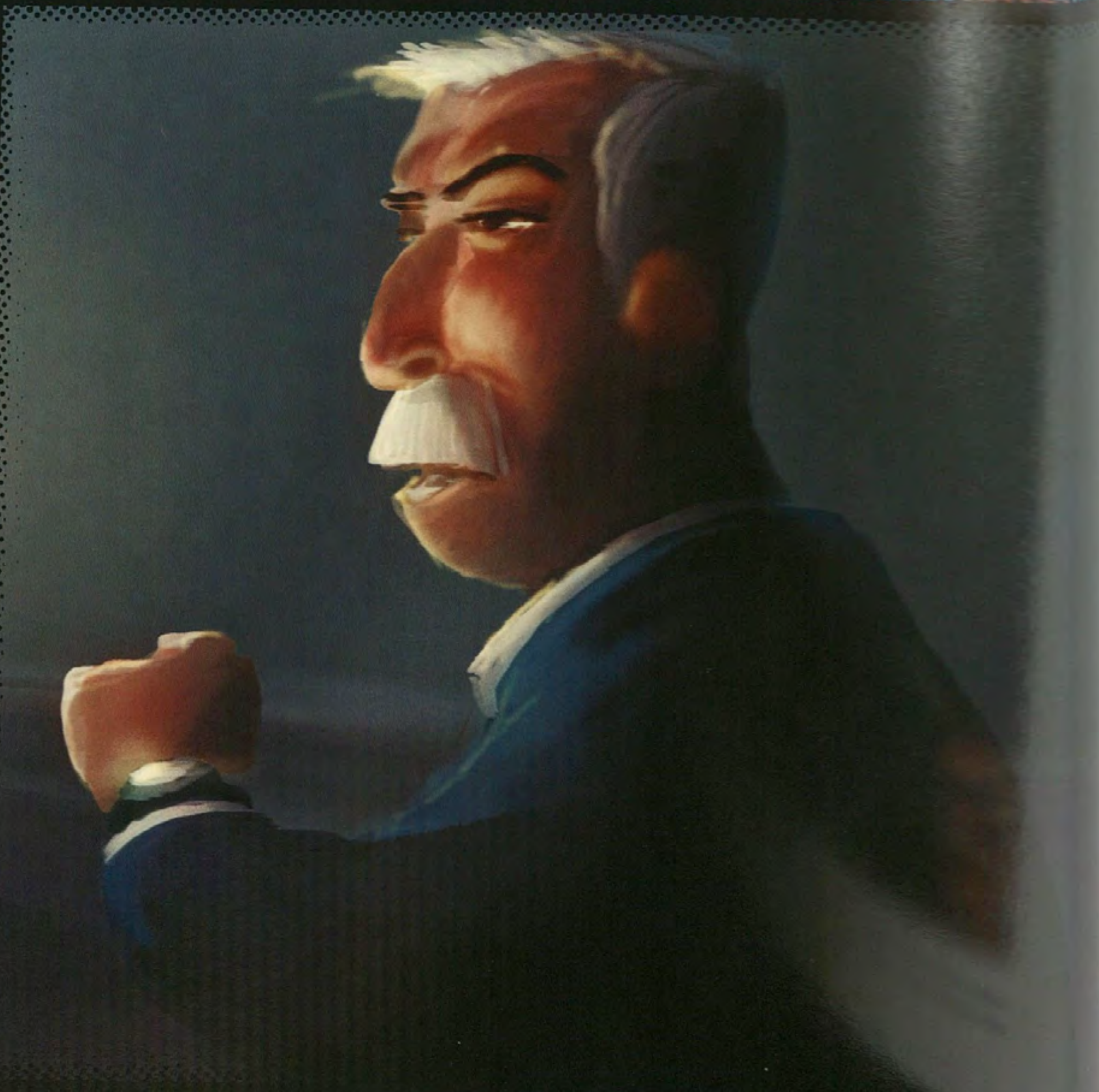


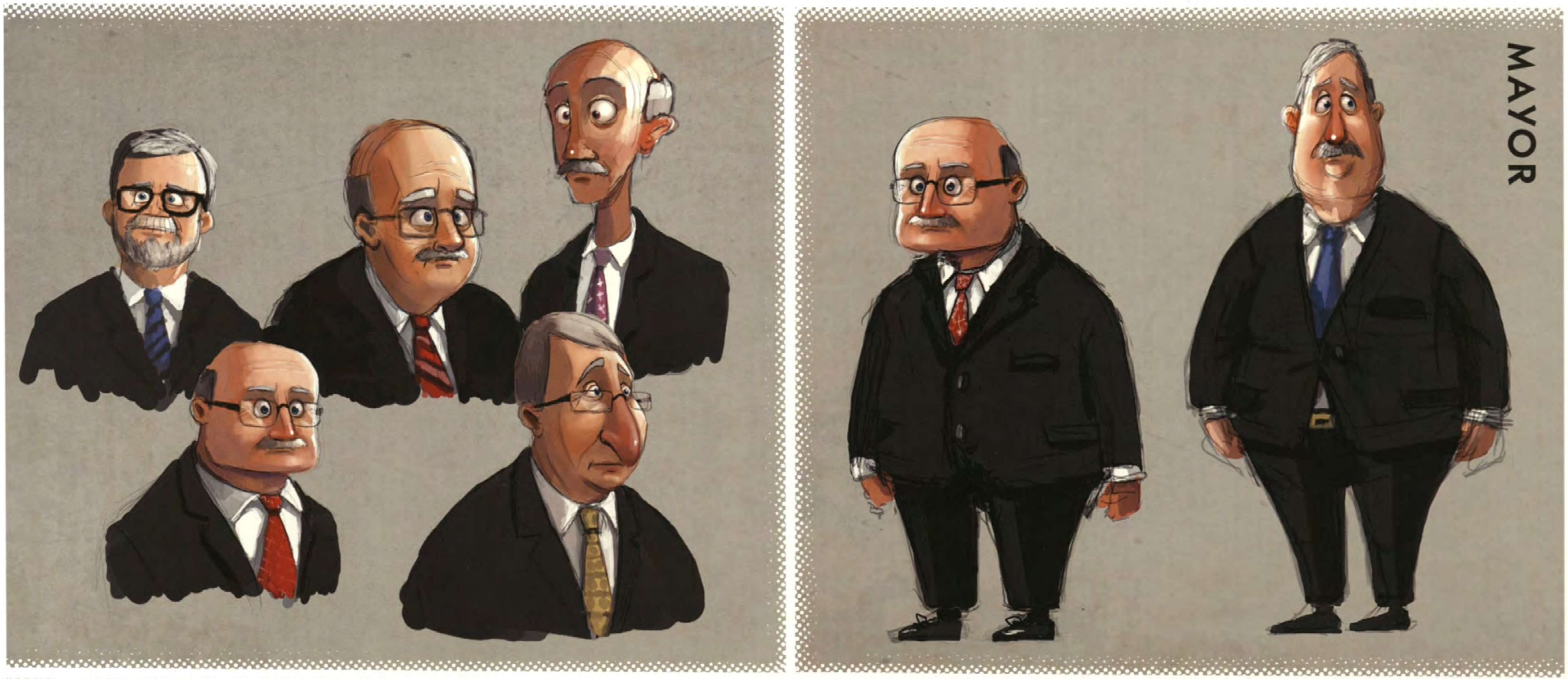


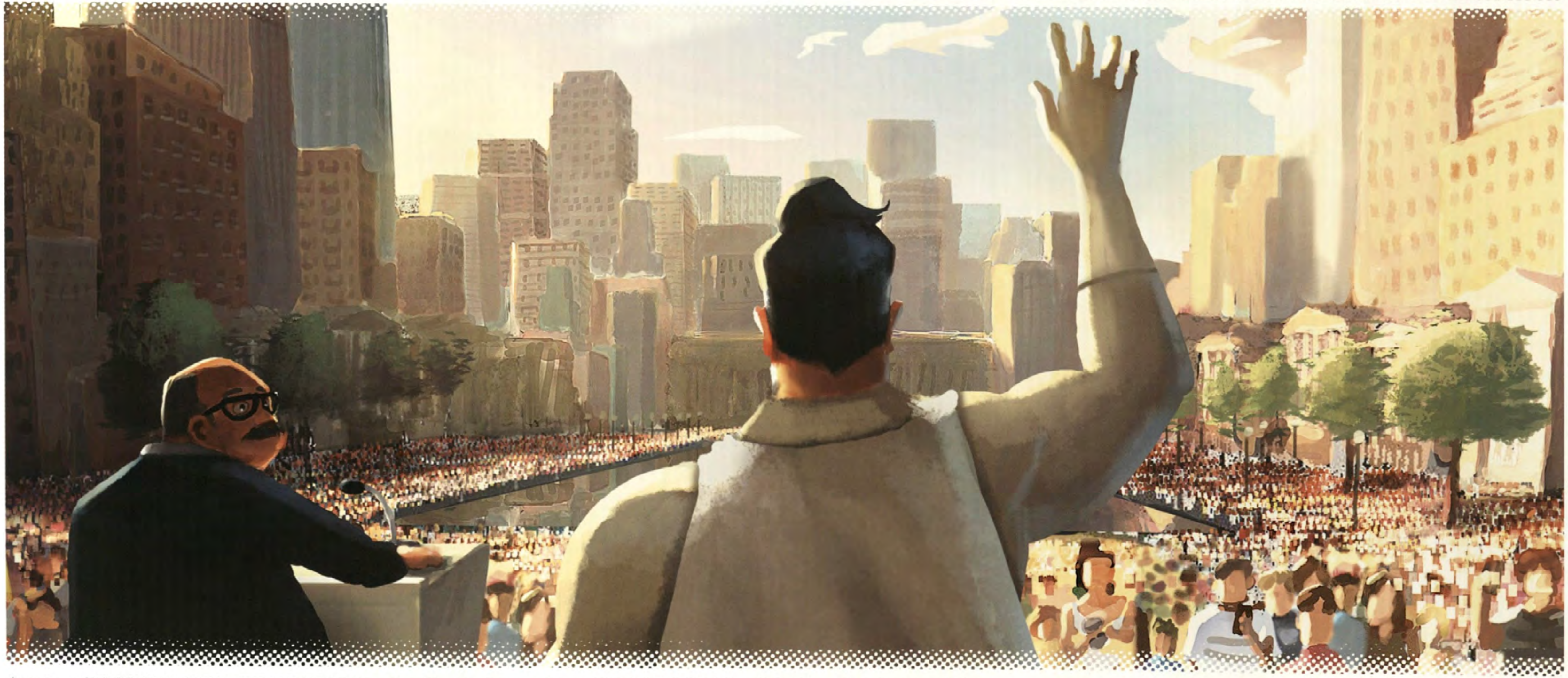


PRISON WARDEN

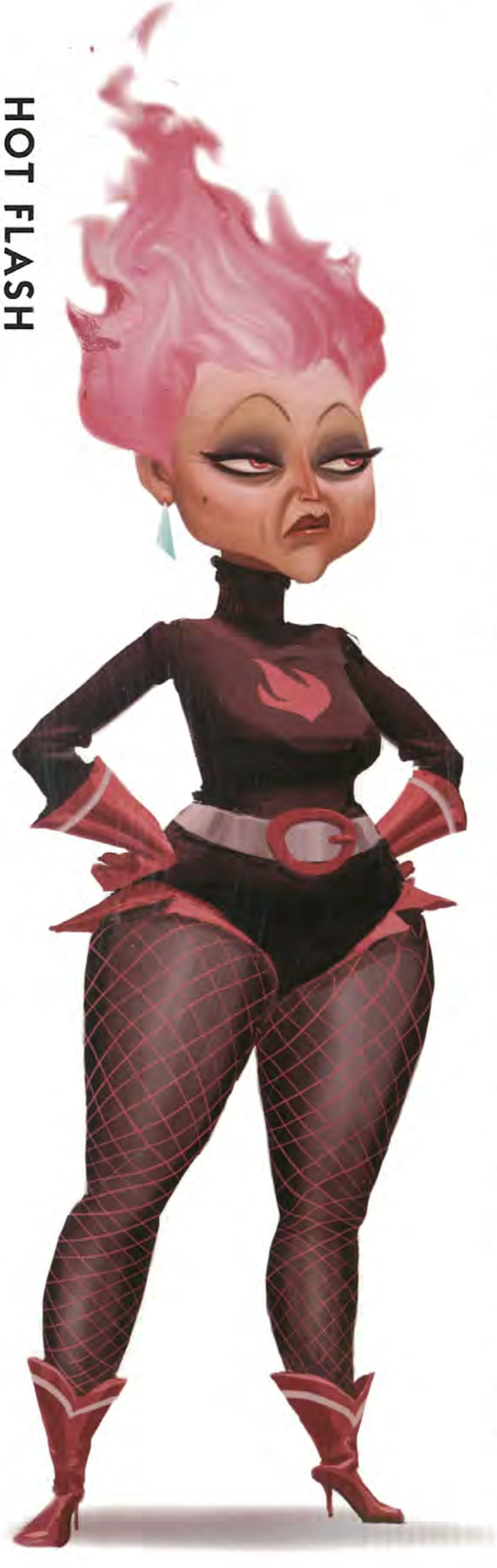








(opposite, top) WARDEN WALKING THROUGH PRISON ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(opposite, bottom left)* MEAN WARDEN ◦ Ruben Perez; *(opposite, bottom right)* WARDEN TALKS ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(top left & right)* MAYOR STUDIES ◦ Goro Fujita; *(bottom)* METRO MAN CALLS OUT TO THE CROWD ◦ Goro Fujita



THE DOOM SYNDICATE

Doomed to the digital equivalent of the cutting-room floor, the Doom Syndicate was a legion of villains who, as producer Denise Cascino puts it, "kept the clock ticking while Megamind was making his plans. Ultimately, it became too busy to service that many characters and story lines."

Some members of this group didn't survive first drafts: the ill-fated Jive Turkey was sometimes funk-adelic, sometimes just a guy in a turkey suit, according to character designer Shane Prigmore's illustrations. And there is no trace of swinging-'60s platinum-blonde ponytail shaker Lady Doppler, who could control the weather, in the final cut of *Megamind*; only some charming character sketches by character designer Chris Reccardi survive.

Prigmore's the Puzzler and Crossword were two proposed evildoers who were never cast, and the adorably shocking twins Electro and Cutie only made it to the semifinals. Visual development artist Ruben Hickman's lava monster Behemoth was once set to tangle with Metro Man at an amusement park. As for Steel Fist and the super-Viking villain Valhelena (a.k.a. Leg Beard), it is only clear they are up to no good, and it's hard to get more specific than that.

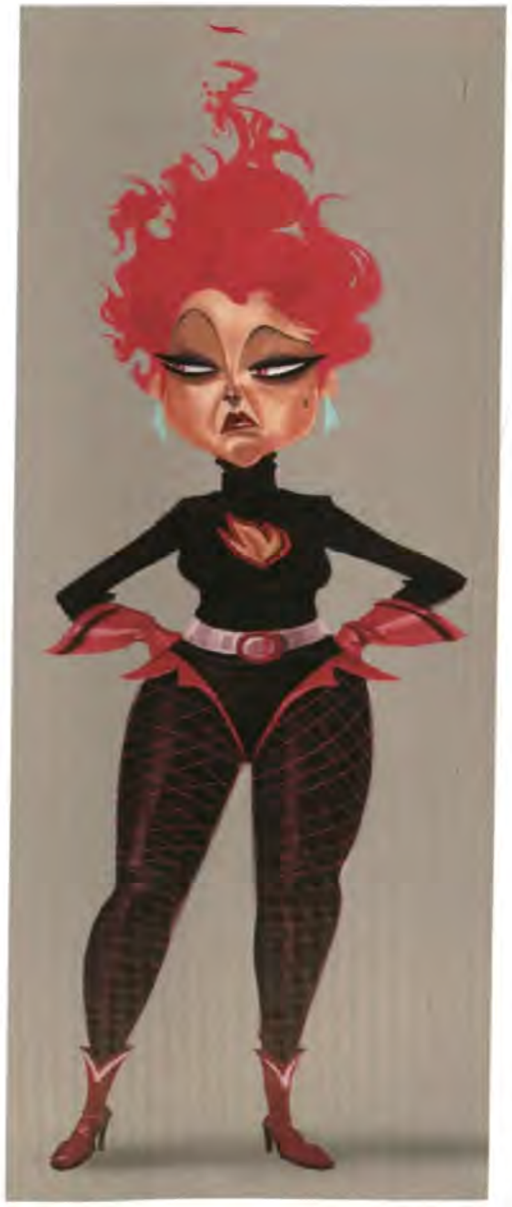
Three Doom Syndicate members made it the furthest to the finish line. One was Psycho Delic, a sort of hallucinatory skeleton in fur who likes to vanish in a cloud of sinister purple smoke. About to pillage a helpless Metro City, Psycho Delic, who tended to create shudders all around, commented, "It will be like taking candy from a morgue."

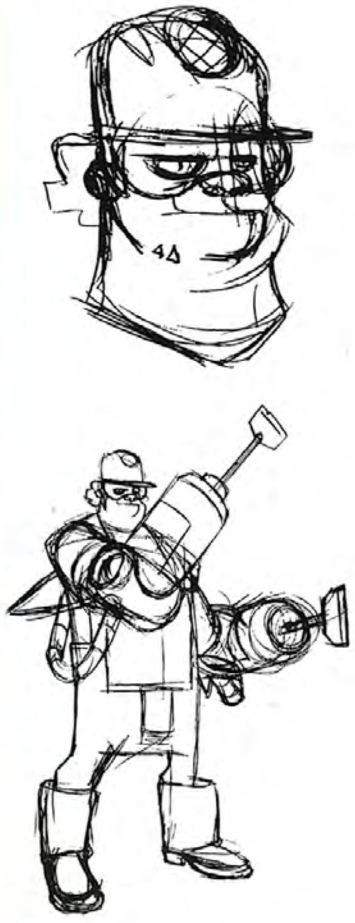
Destruction Worker was a much simpler kind of villain: a palooka who tears things up with muscle power and metal jackhammer hands. Last, but certainly not least, was Hot Flash, a super-powered woman of a certain age, who, production designer David James comments, "was meant to be Hal's super-hot, much older girlfriend."

She was, in a word, a cougar. Perhaps a little mature for spandex, this fire-starter with literally flaming hair tended to eject fireballs when no one expected them. Alas, Hot Flash, like the rest of the Doom Syndicate, must simmer on the back burner of future adventures.

Art director Tim Lamb notes, "Some of these secondary or tertiary characters are the most fun to conceptualize because you can really go crazy with the design."

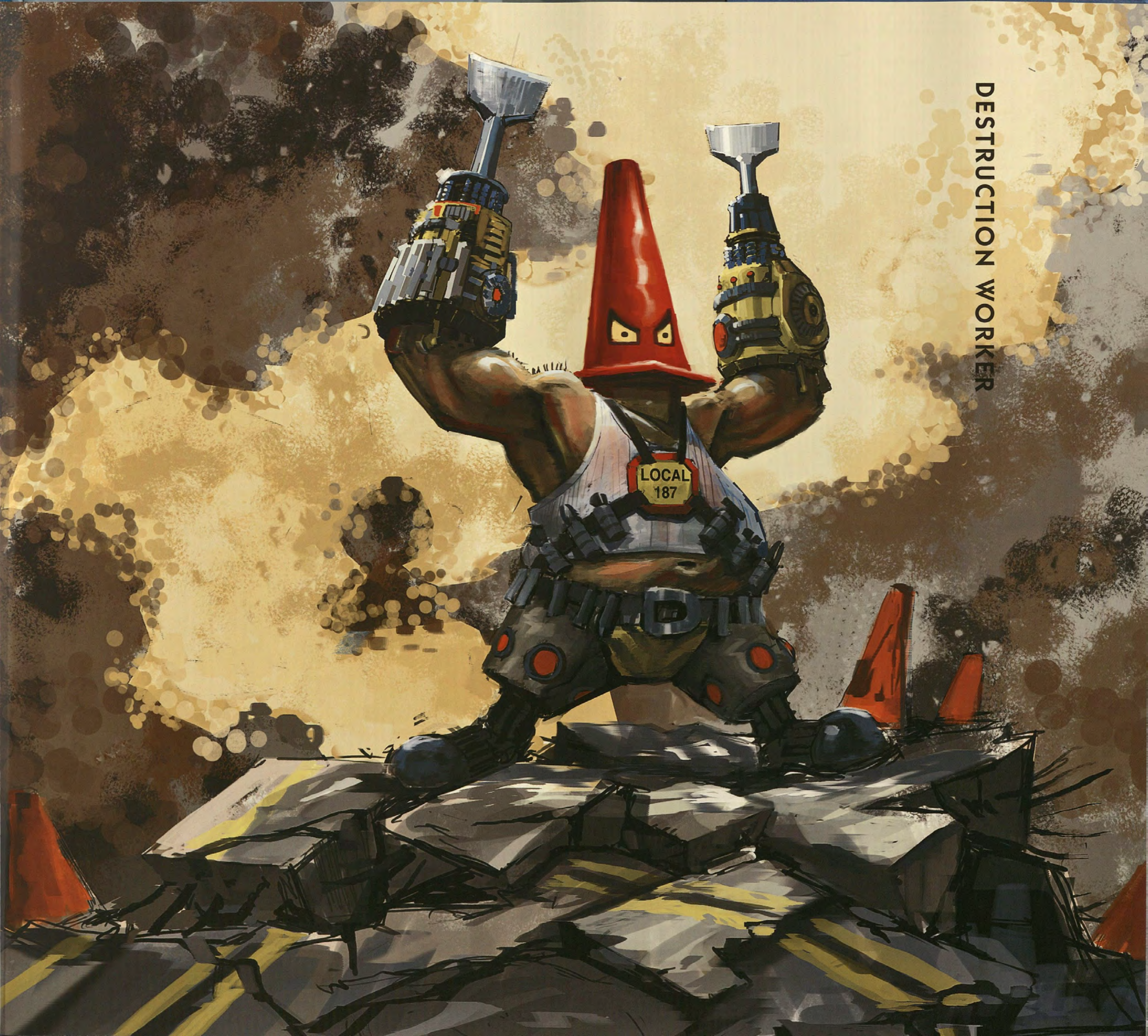
Head of story Catherine Rader echoes Lamb's enthusiasm. "They were the coolest characters," she laments. "Maybe they'll be in the sequel."

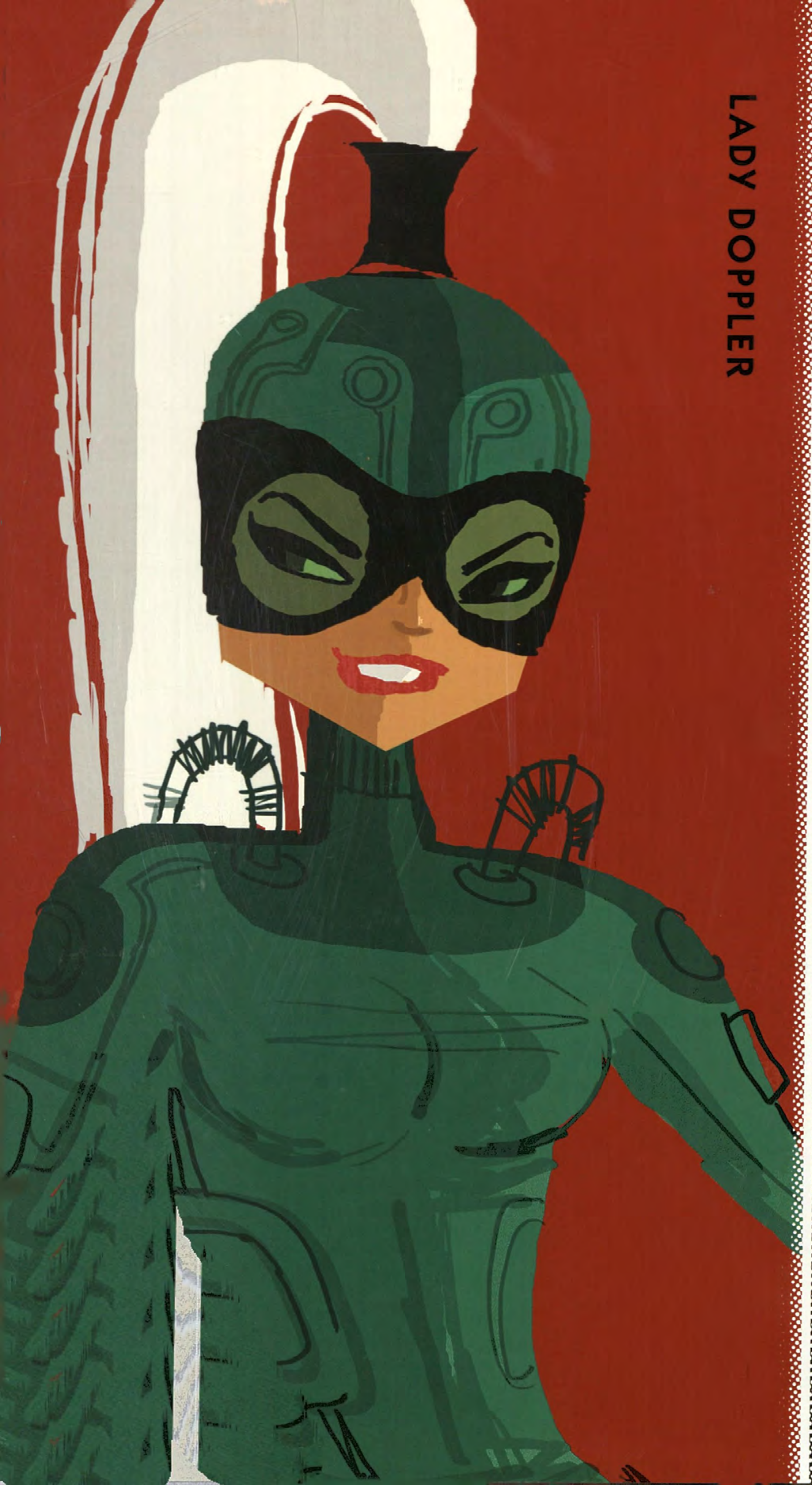


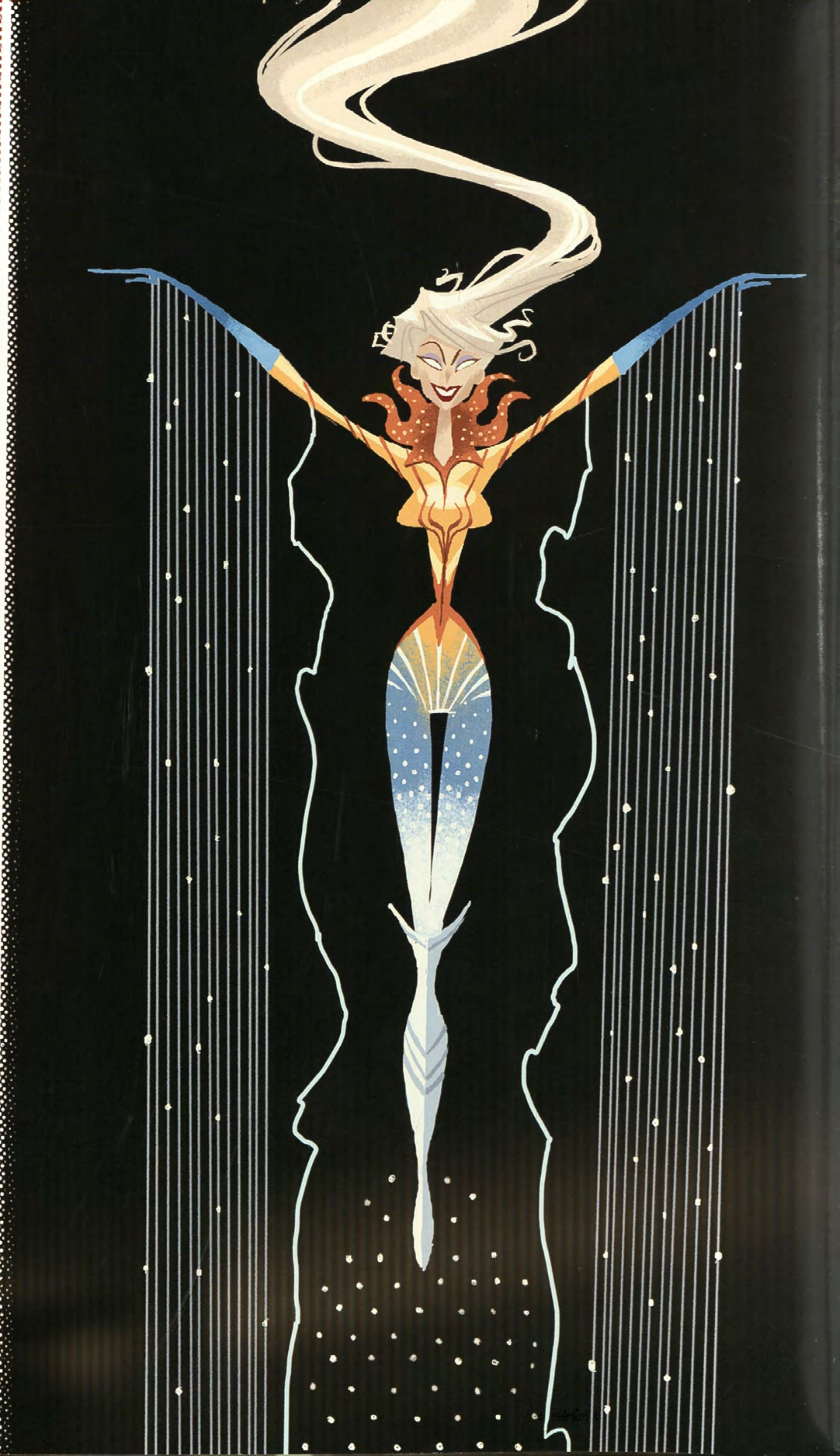


(far left) HOT FLASH ◦ Tim Lamb & Devin Crane; *(left)* HOT FLASH ◦ Devin Crane; *(above)* DESTRUCTION WORKER SKETCHES ◦ Sean Galloway; *(opposite)* DESTRUCTION WORKER ◦ Ruben Hickman

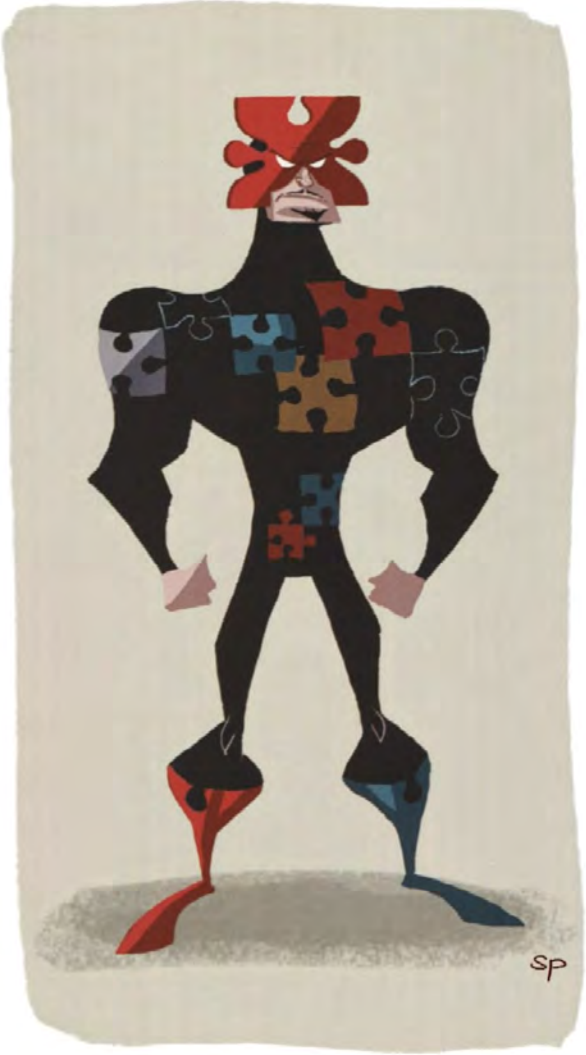
DESTRUCTION WORKER

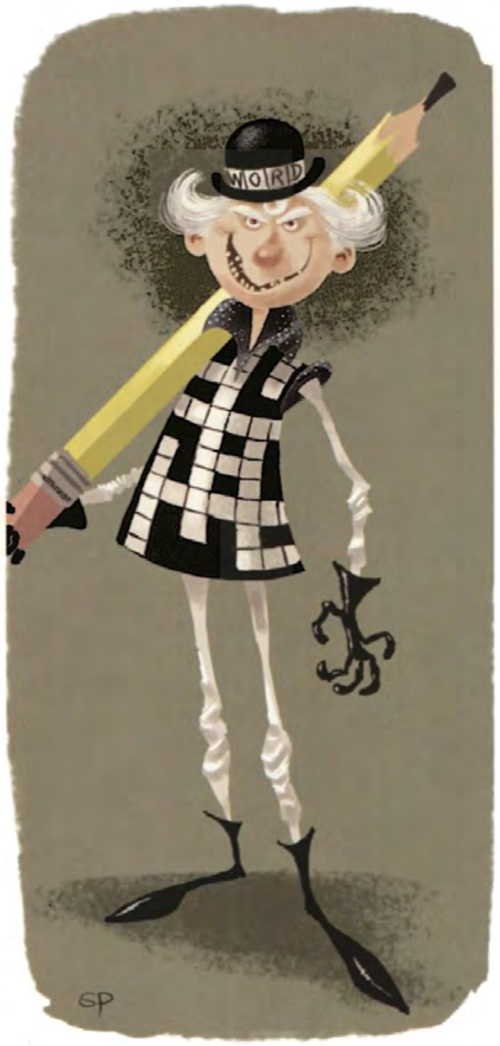


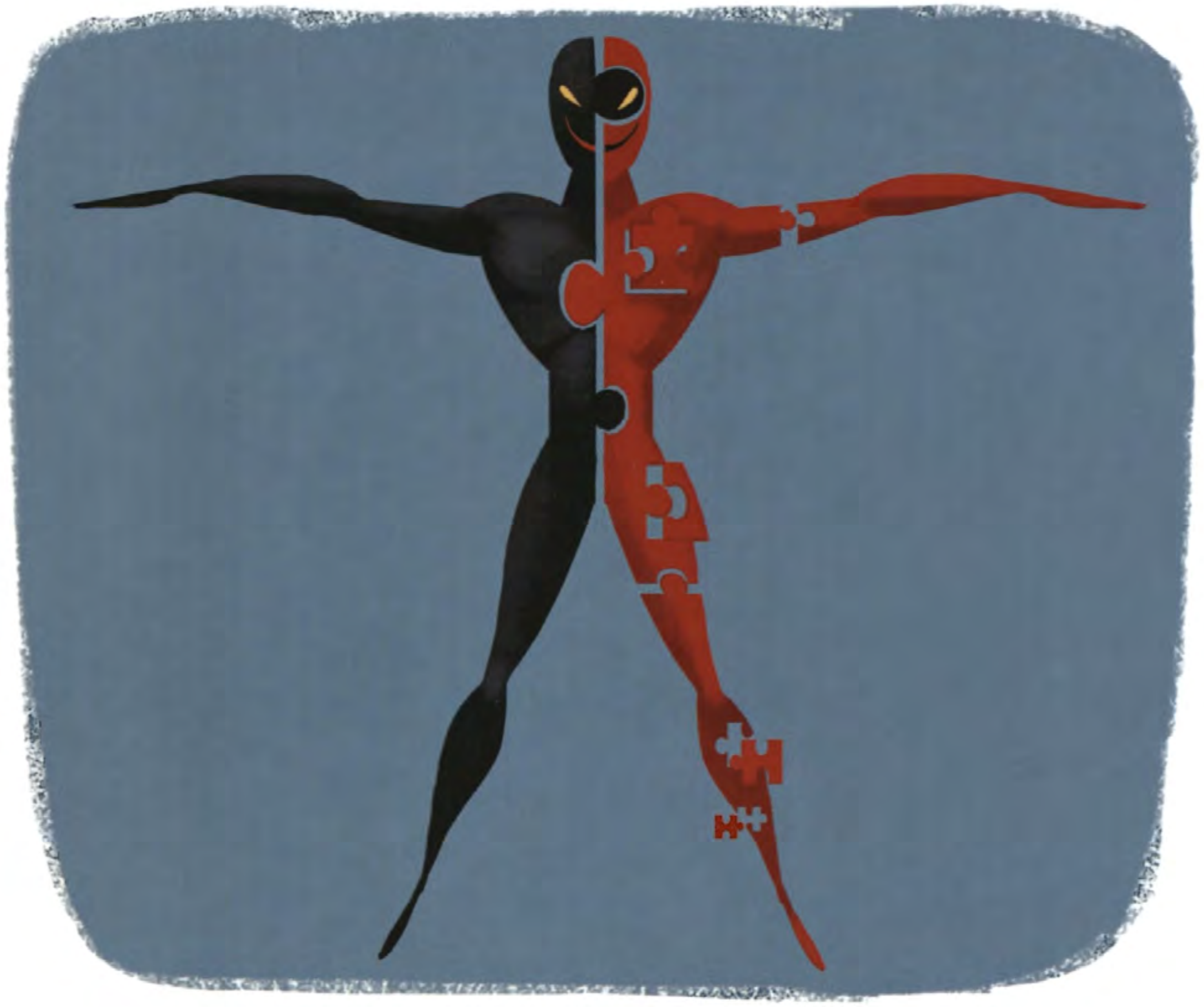

LADY DOPPLER



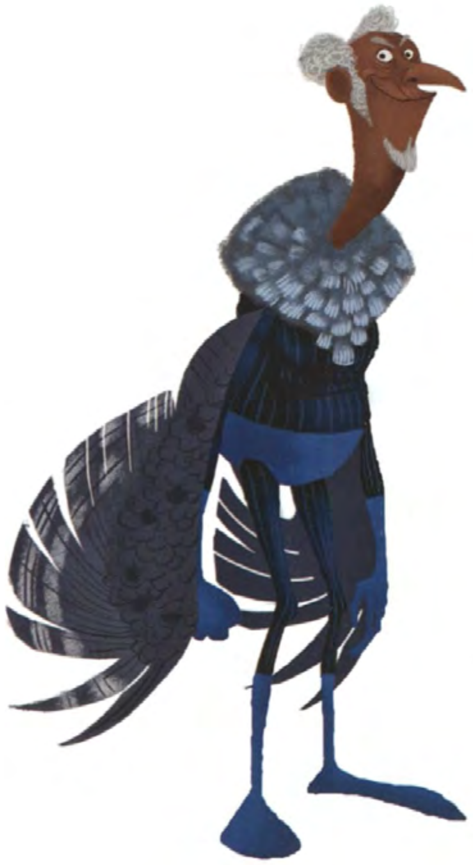
THE PUZZLER

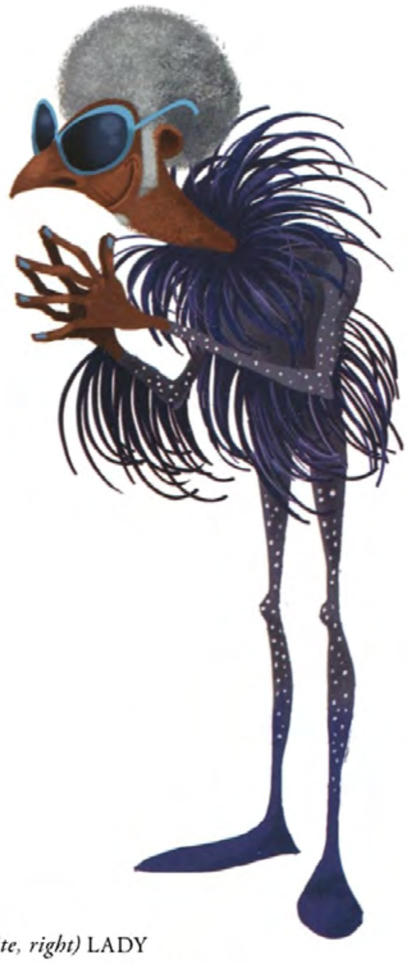


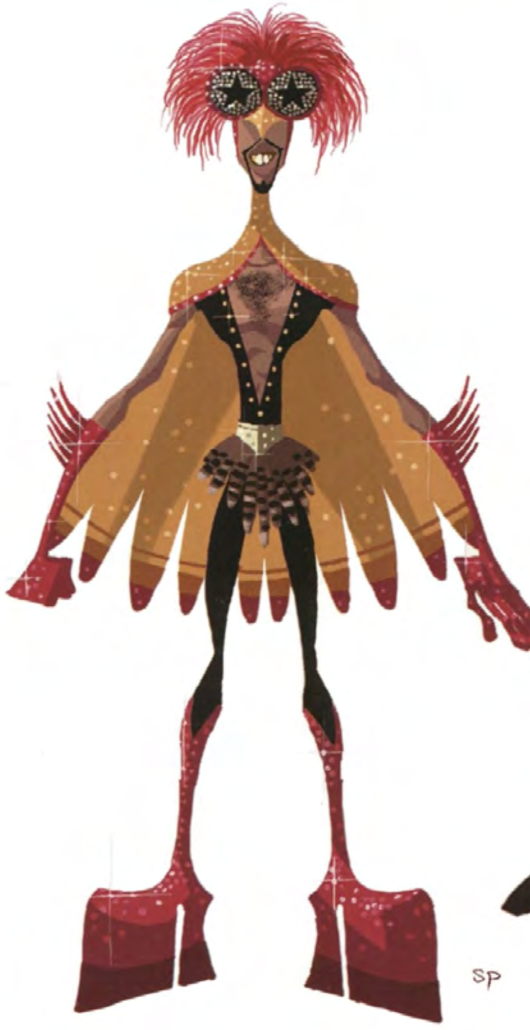


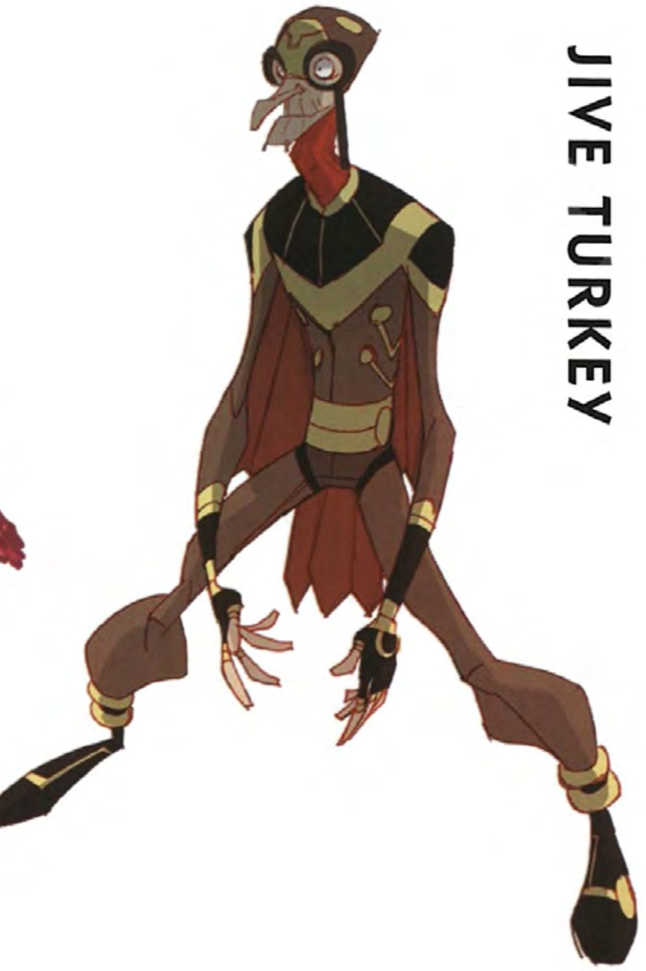


JIVE TURKEY

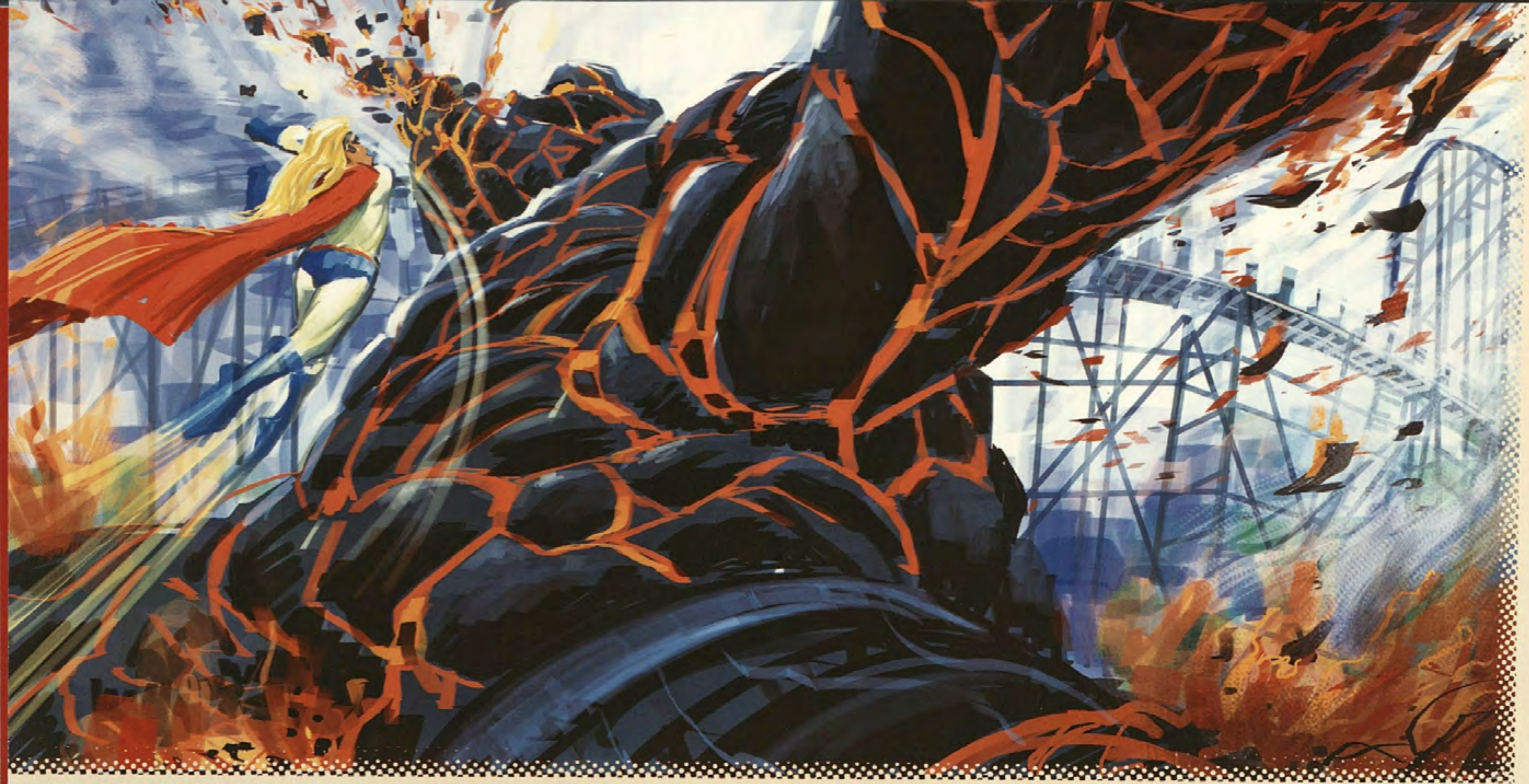




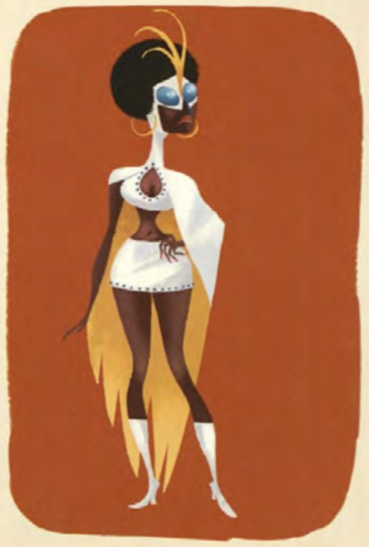




(opposite, left) LADY DOPPLER ◦ Chris Reccardi; *(opposite, right)* LADY DOPPLER ◦ Shane Prigmore; *(top left & middle)* THE PUZZLER ◦ Shane Prigmore; *(top right)* THE PUZZLER ◦ Shannon Tindle; *(above, left to right)* JIVE TURKEY ◦ Shannon Tindle; JIVE TURKEY ◦ Shane Prigmore; JIVE TURKEY ◦ Sean Galloway

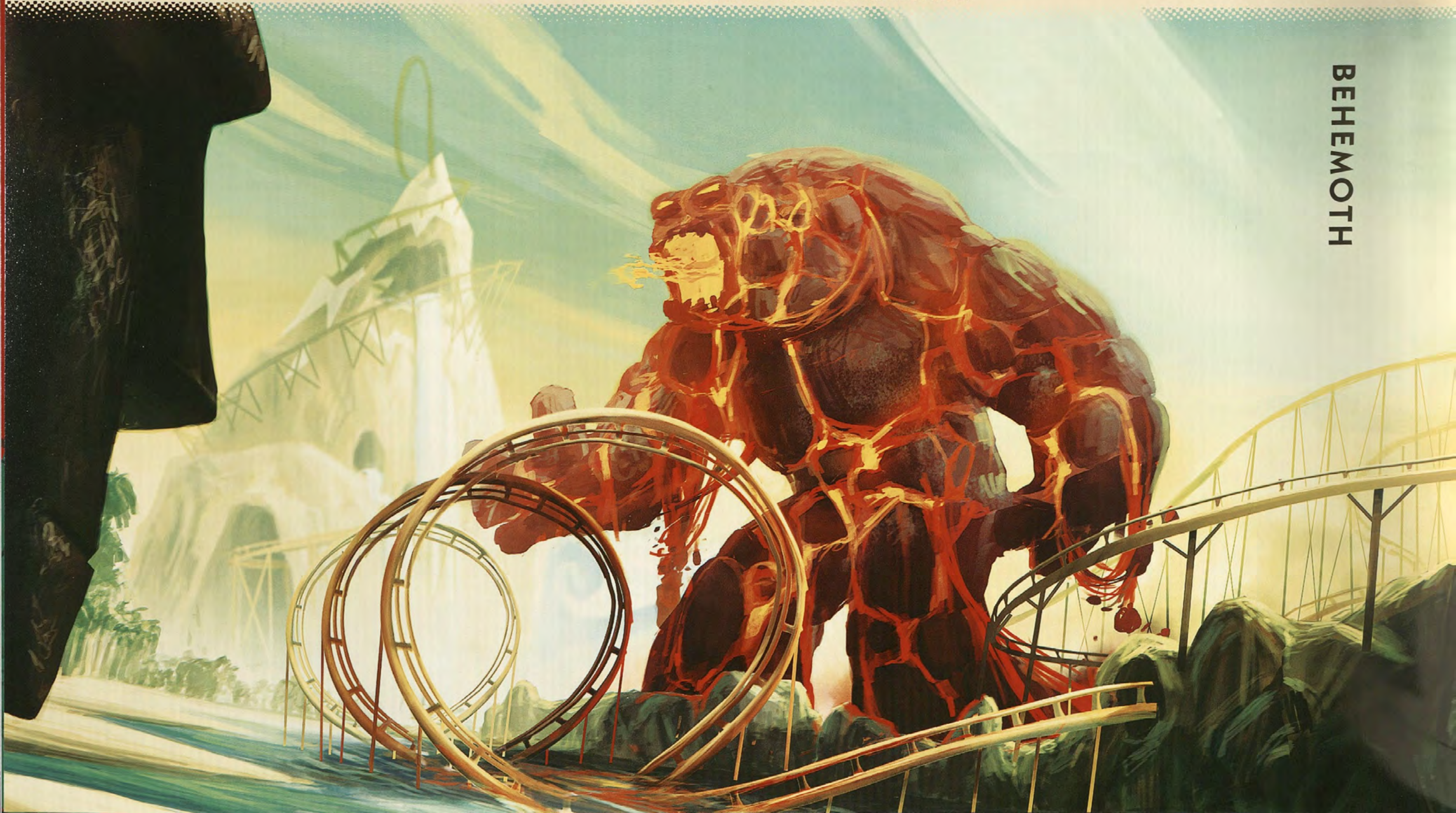


ROCKATOO

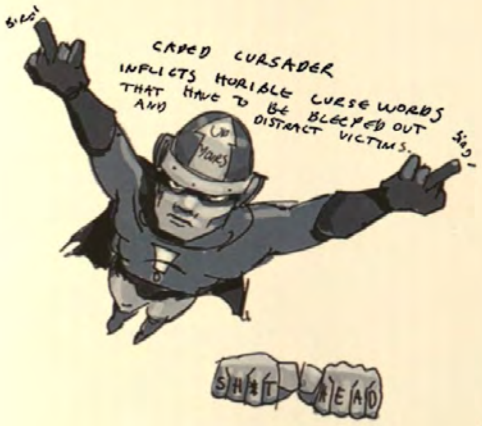


(left) BIG PUNCH ◦ Ruben Hickman; *(above)* ROCKATOO ◦ Shannon Tindle; *(below)* BEHEMOTH ◦ Travis Koller; *(opposite)* VILLAIN STUDIES ◦ James Wilson

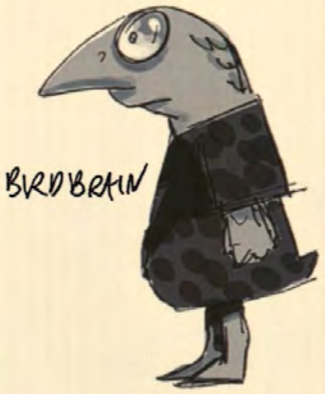
BEHEMOTH



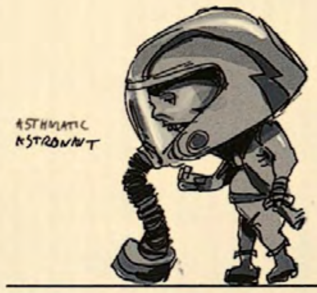
VILLAINS



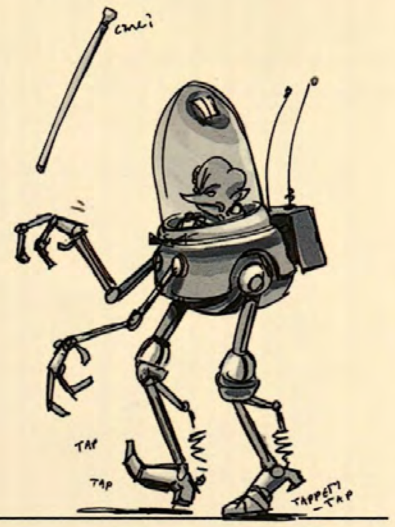
CAPED CURSADER
INFLICTS HORIBLE CURSE WORDS THAT HAVE TO BE BLEEPED OUT AND DISTRACT VICTIMS.



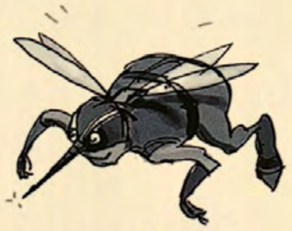
BIRDBRAIN



ASTHMATIC ASTRONAUT

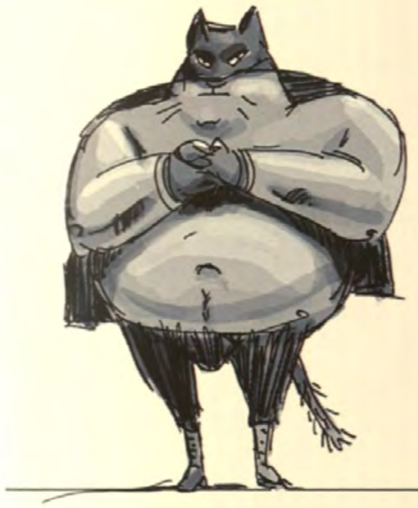


TAP DANCING ALIEN ROBOT
mesmerises good citizens with wild alien routines



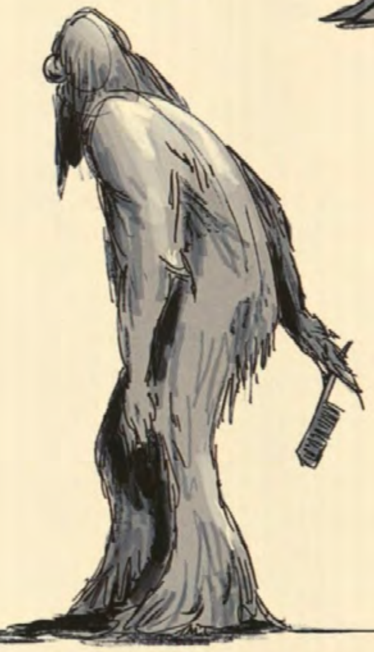
mosquito man

Lives in standing water
Flies around unseen for long periods of time –
painlessly injects venom with proboscus of malevolence.



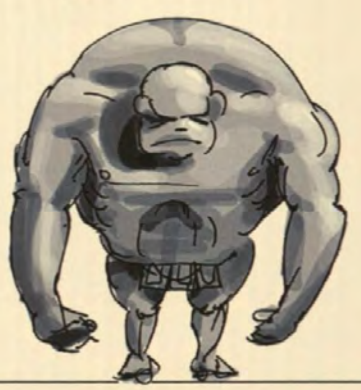
CAT MAN DOO

DEADLY SPRAY

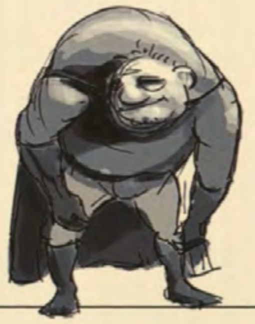


8' HAIRY DUDE
VILLAIN

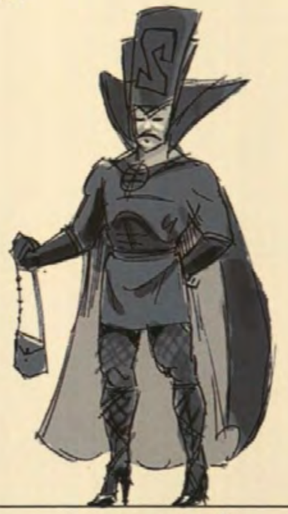
THE LUNK



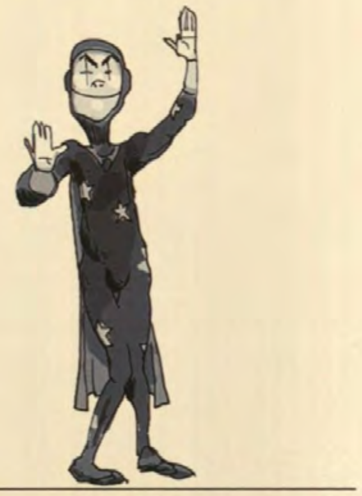
The unremarkable Lunk.



HUMPER DINK

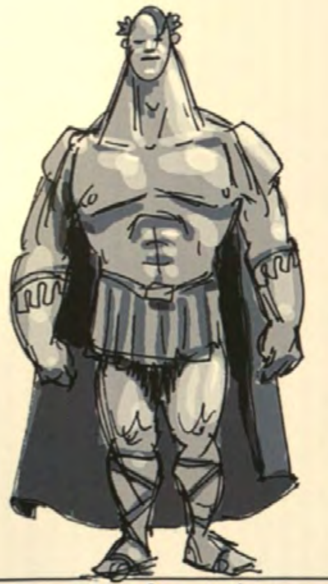


Señor Stilleto
poison tipped needle sharp heels.

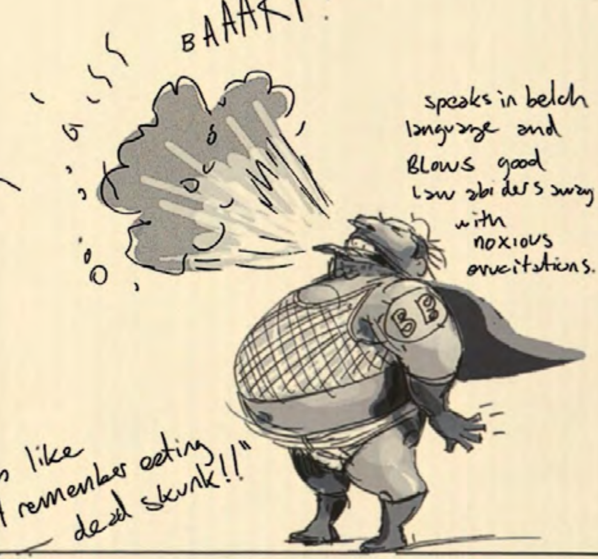


MINERATOR
BATTLES GOOD AND COMMITS CRIME USING SILENT DEVIANT GESTICULATION

> "The Doom Syndicate are the frat boys (and gals) who crash a party, the out-of-town relatives who appear when you come into wealth, the drunken friends who goad you into doing really stupid things."
>
> —CATHERINE RADER, HEAD OF STORY



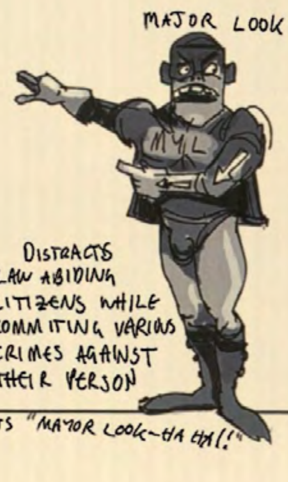
El GREEKO



speaks in belch language and Blows good law abiders away with noxious eructations.

Jokes like "I don't remember eating that... dead skunk!!"

BILLEOUS BELCH



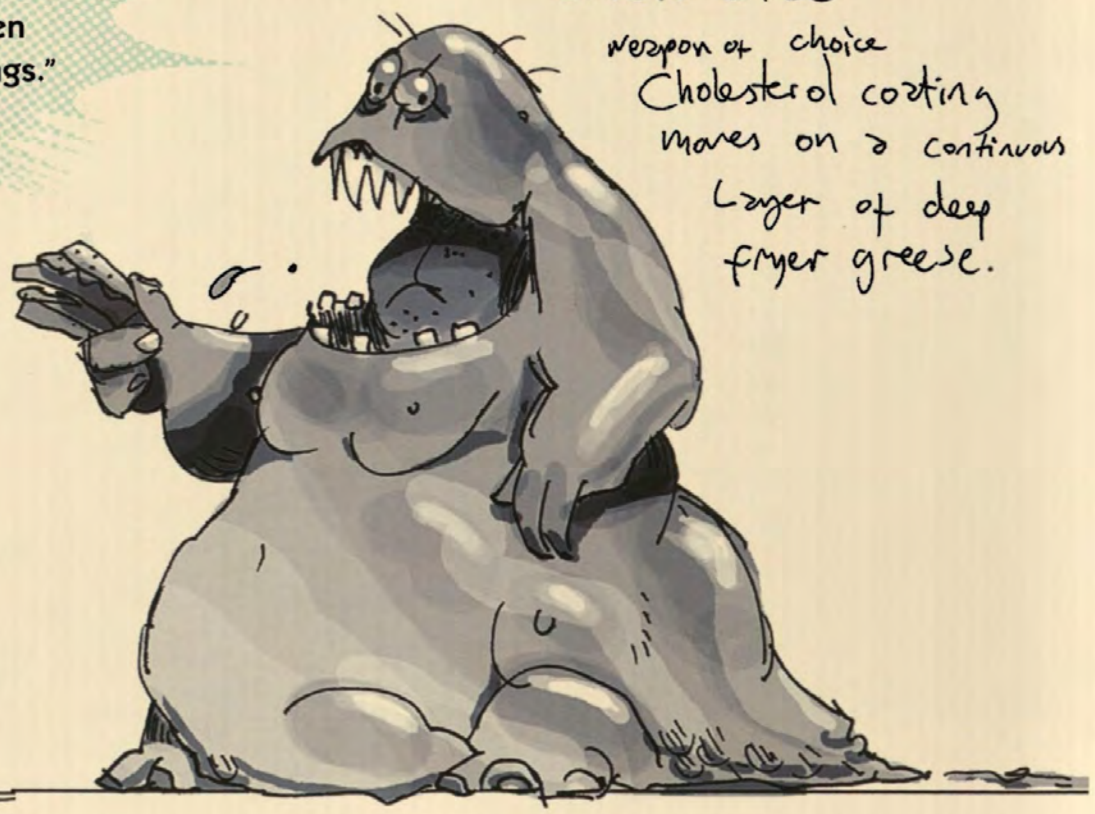
MAJOR LOOK

DISTRACTS LAW ABIDING CITIZENS WHILE COMMITING VARIOUS CRIMES AGAINST THEIR PERSON

SHOUTS "MAJOR LOOK–HA HA!!"

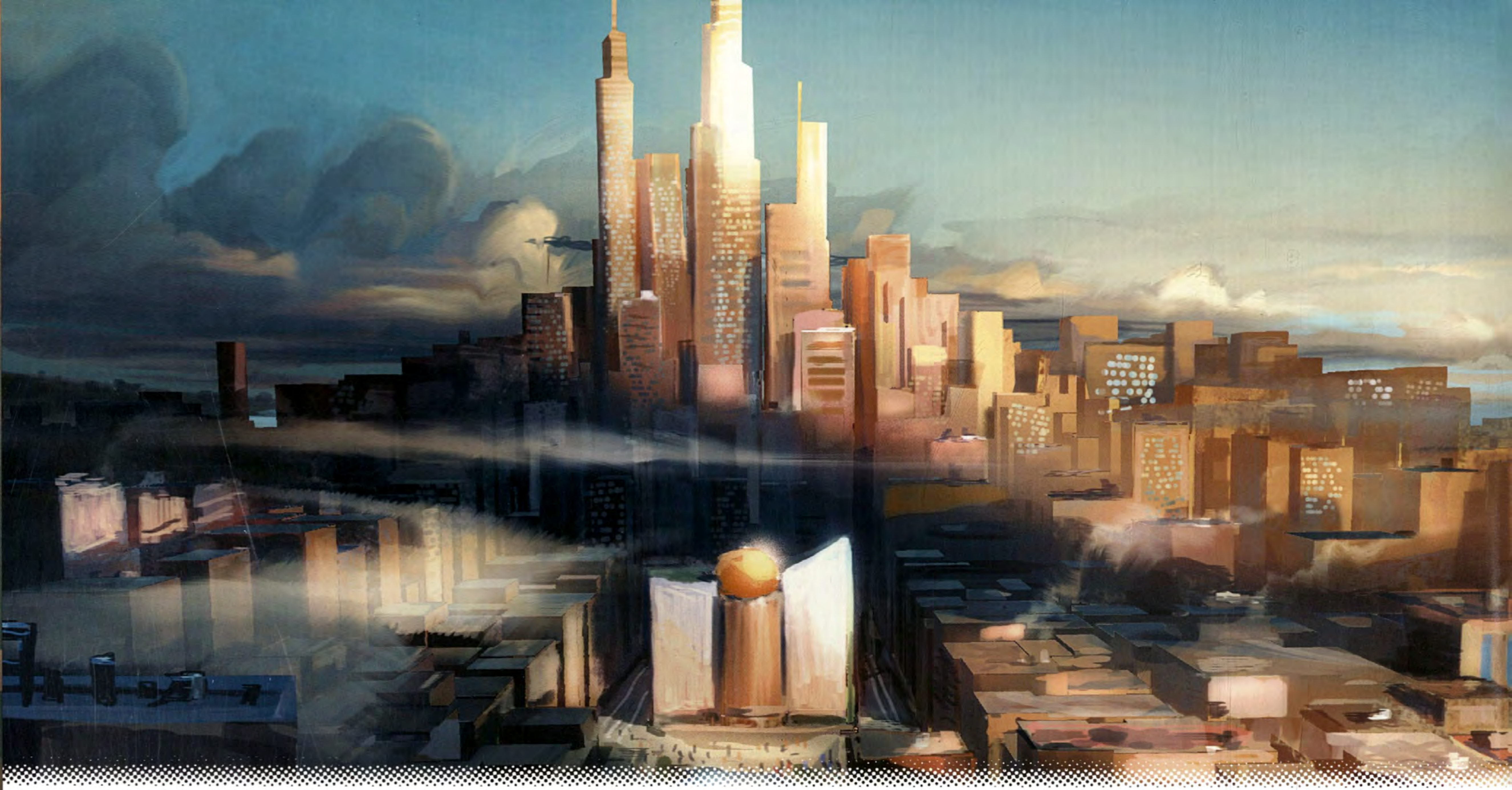
SUPER SIZE

weapon of choice
Cholesterol coating
moves on a continuous
Layer of deep
fryer greese.



PART 2

LOCATIONS



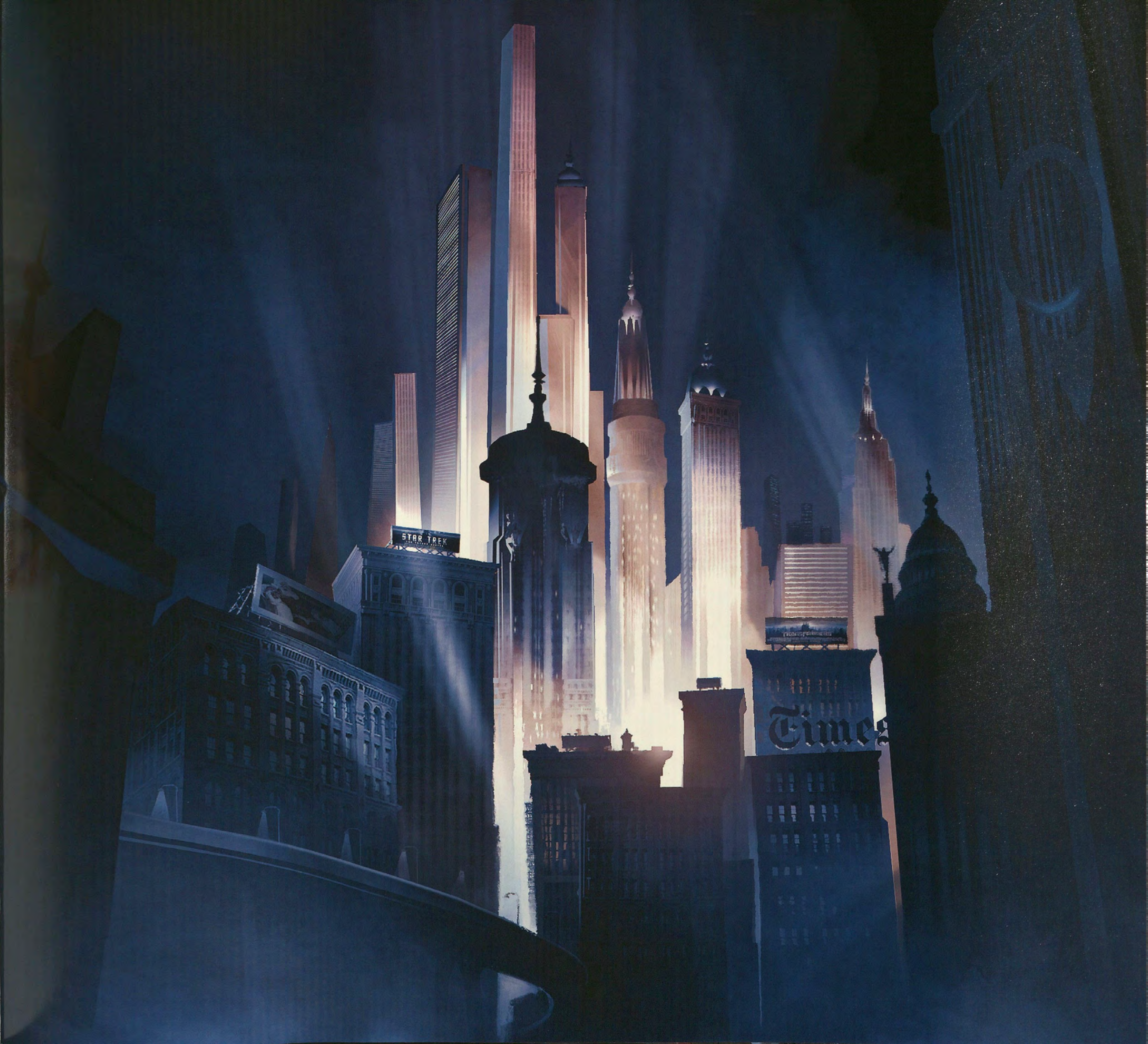
METRO CITY

Production designer David James says Metro City is a symbol: "It isn't meant to represent any city—it's every city instead."

During the extensive preparation for *Megamind*, the look of the city changed many times. As city development supervisor Jonathan Gibbs notes, "The city itself went through the most changes. It wasn't a case where we could, say, build New York by sourcing Google Earth. It took us a long time to come up with what the plan for the city should be."

In superhero lore, cities can be shining towers or hellish canyons within which are hidden the aeries of wealthy heroes or the caves of masked romantics. The New York City chauvinism of Marvel Comics's Stan Lee and Jack Kirby would permit no substitutions for the city they loved. They grounded their stories of super-skirmishes amid the boulevards, bridges, and towers of Manhattan. In DC comics, Gotham and Metropolis became two distinct visions of symbolic urban areas: respectively, the American city at its worst and at its best. Cartoonist Kurt Busiek's Astro City synthesized these two treatments into a vast megalopolis of both qualities.

(previous pages) METRO CITY SUNSET ◦ Dominique Louis;
(top) METRO MAN MUSEUM MORNING ◦ Kory Heinzen;
(opposite) DARK FERRIS CITY NIGHT ◦ Dominique Louis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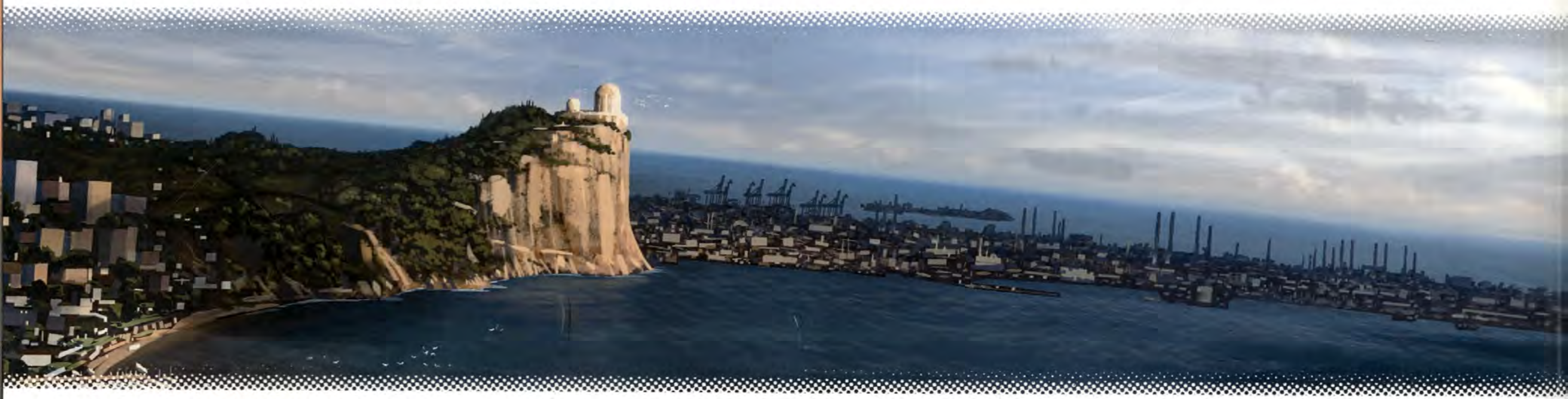


(top) LOOKING AT REAL OBSERVATORY ◆ Erwin Madrid; *(opposite, left)* DOWN CITY VIEW ◆ Erwin Madrid; *(opposite, right)* STREET SCENE ◆ Erwin Madrid

"We felt that in order to do the story justice, we were going to have to see the city. We were going to have to have a sense of the city as a place they were fighting over. And we'd never built a whole city before."

—JONATHAN GIBBS,
CITY DEVELOPMENT SUPERVISOR

Just that kind of division runs through *Megamind*: Metro Man pronounces his hometown's name traditionally, while Megamind changes the emphasis to make the name rhyme with atrocity. "Same difference," he jokes—and jokes with a purpose.

The center of Metro City is a cluster of office spires curving around the oversized axis of the Metro Man Museum, with its park and reflecting pool. These neoclassical monuments, David James notes, are meant to have similar statures to those found on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

The visual-development art sometimes makes use of strangely familiar cityscapes. Is that Barcelona's harbor, which has suddenly grown a 1930s-era observatory? Or maybe it's a bit of San Diego? Exact references aside, it's clear that Metro City is a coastal city within the palm belt, with billowy, red-tinged subtropical clouds as a backdrop to the superhero battles. Clearly, there's something of Los Angeles in it, and something of San Francisco in the compact city limits of about seven miles square.

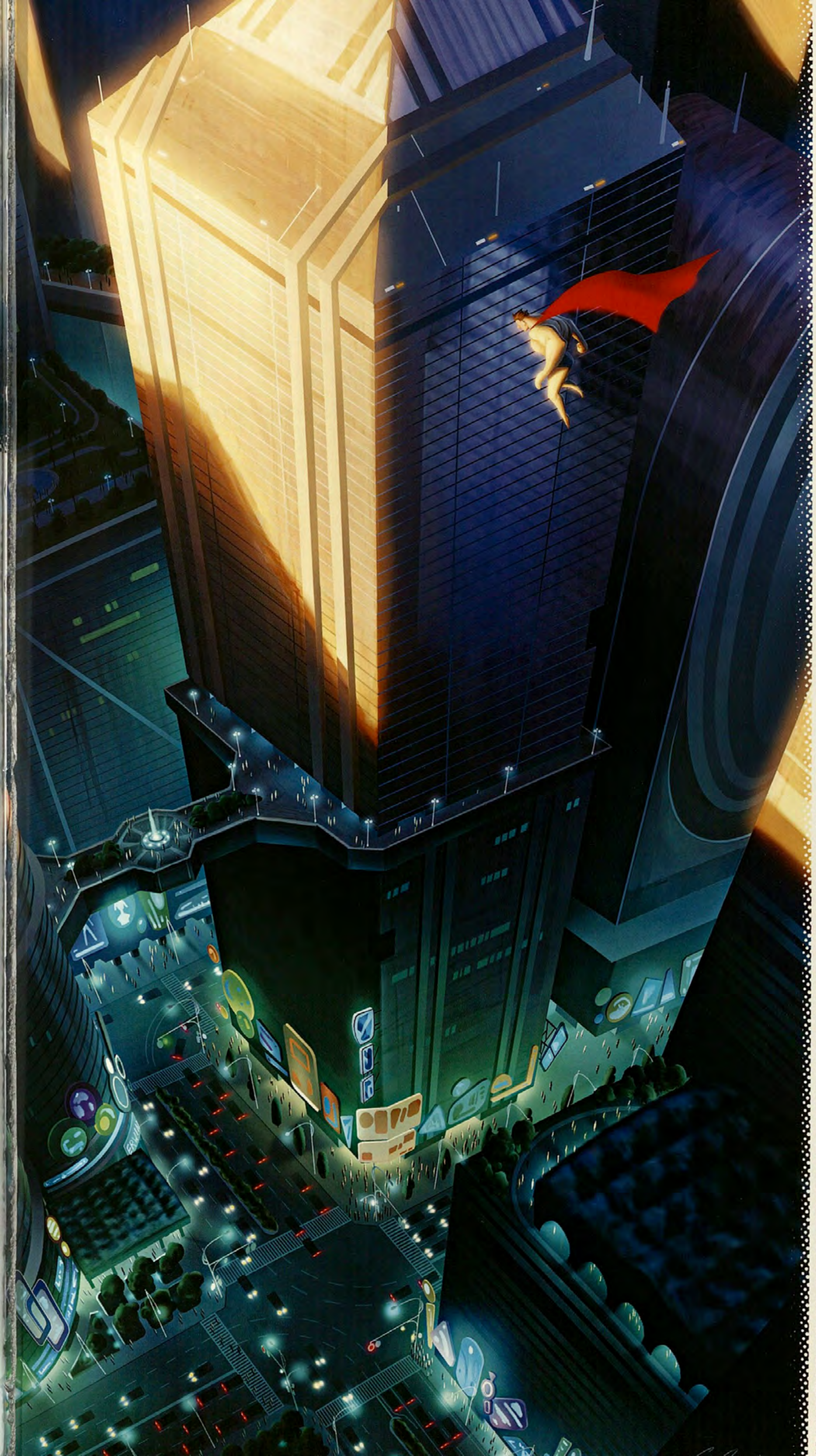
In early versions, it was a futuristic sci-fi paradise. In later views, Metro City became a more realistic, everyday place of the slightly near future. The final version has a little of both.

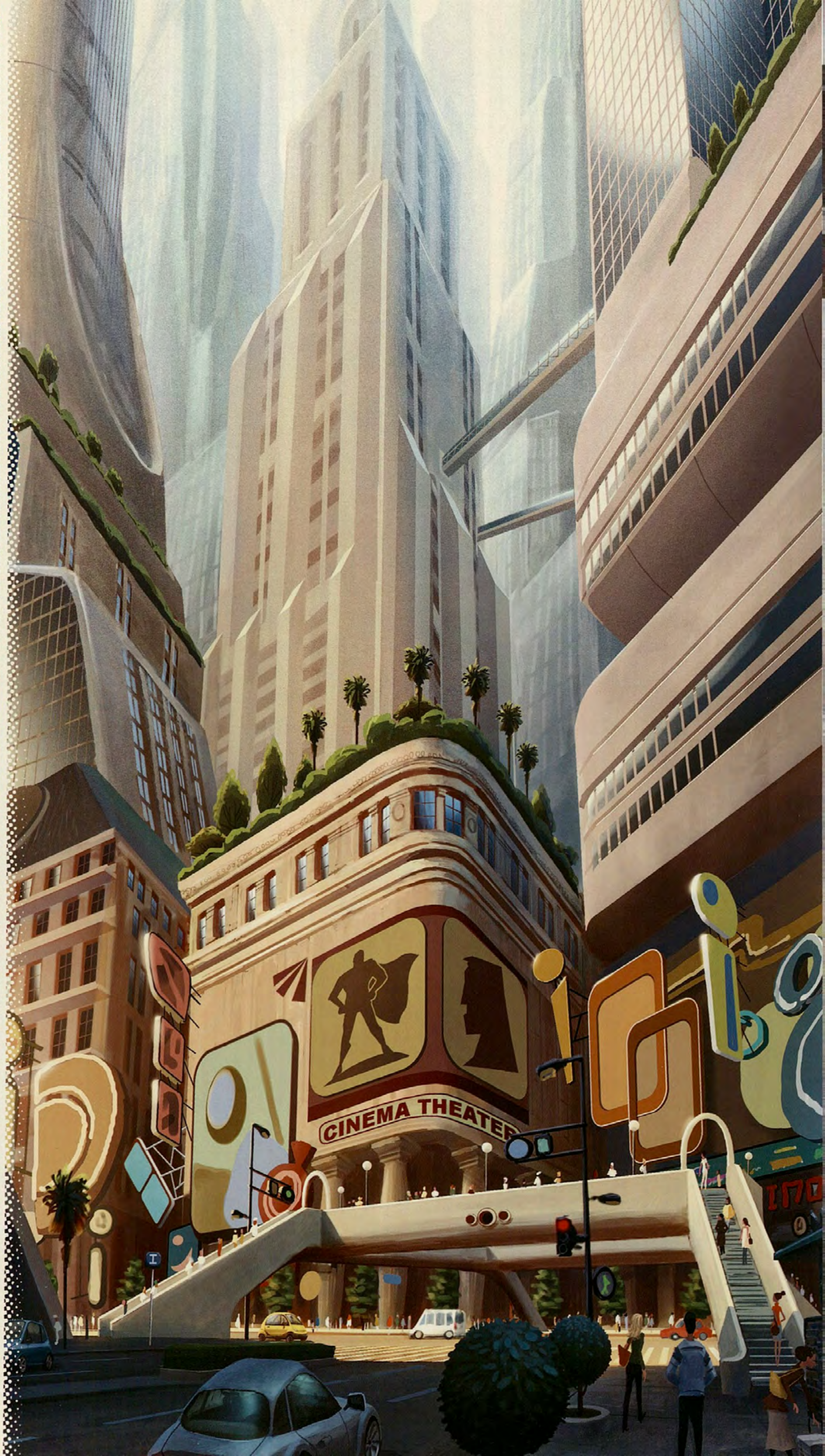
"The cities designed in early iterations were exactly what the script was calling for," James says of the artistic development process that led to the ultimate synthesis. "They were excellent interpretations of what the story was at the time. A lot of the designs early on had these truly fantastic cities—a lot of stuff that was really otherworldly and could be on another planet.

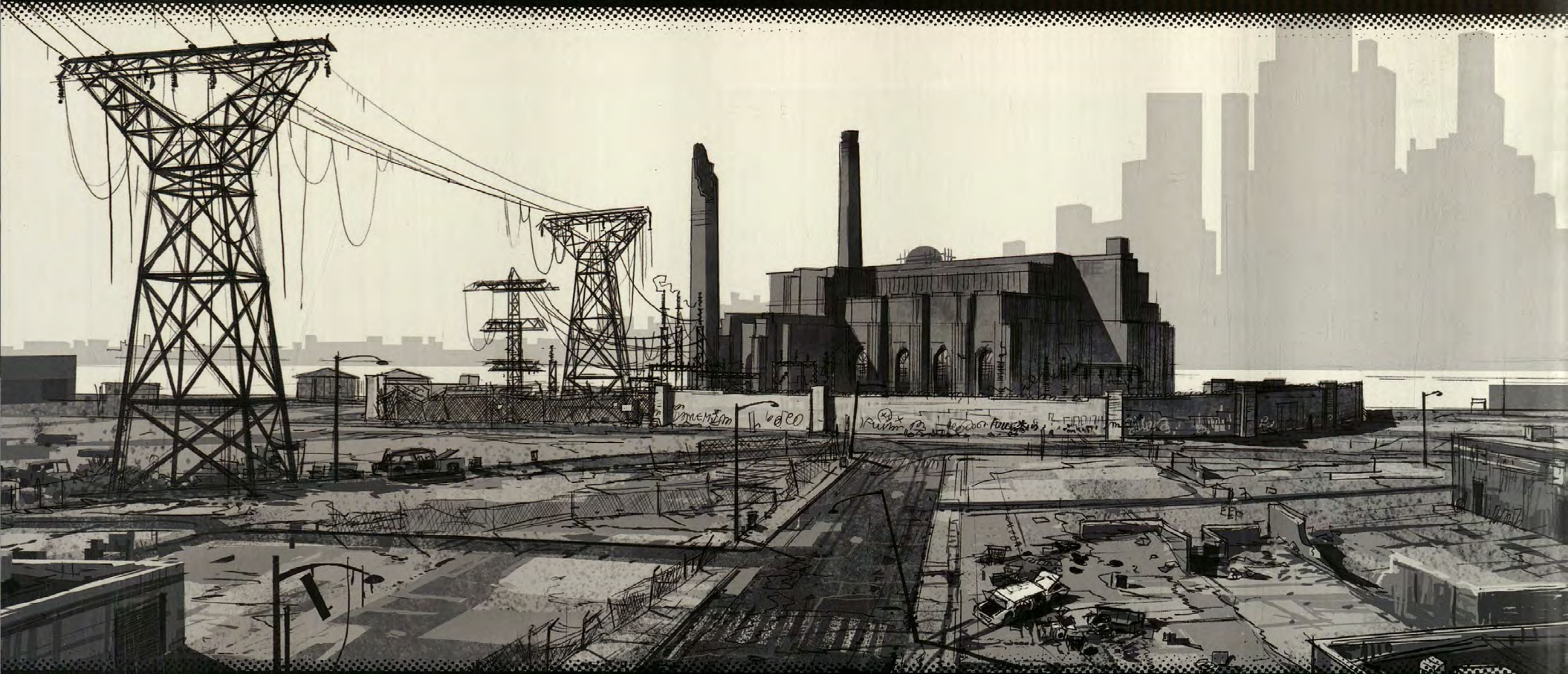
"Brilliant as those designs were, they tended to upstage the characters themselves," James adds. "I wanted to let the visuals and the camerawork to be as spectacular as they could be. But the design itself shouldn't be so over the top that we have to start explaining it. It needs to be grounded so that the characters can stand in front of it. Otherwise, it starts to fight them. I'm a firm believer that in this case the location needed to be the straight man."

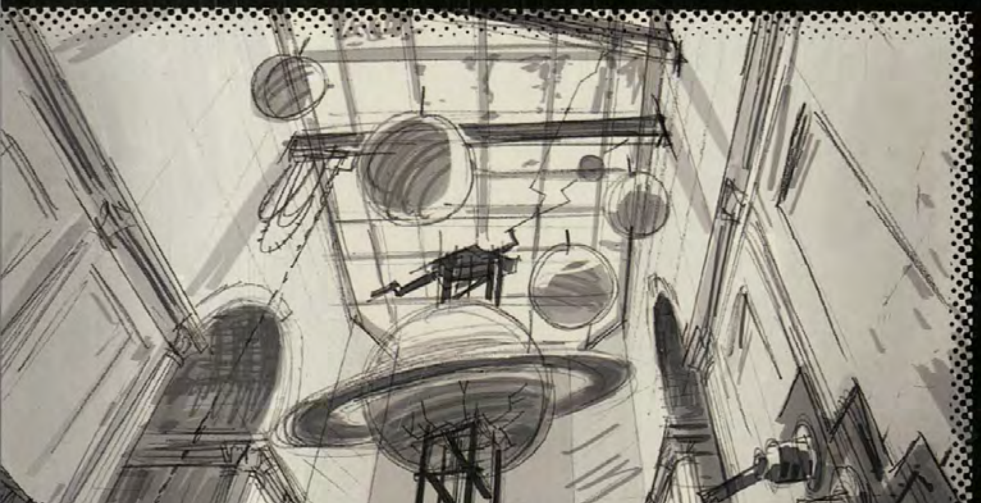
In James's view, Metro City needed to be something like Springfield in *The Simpsons*—a vast everycity, dense with neighborhoods: some homey and handsome, and some depressingly shabby, with oversized freeways rammed through. Skyways are part of it: at best, they're like Seattle's Monorail, curving gently at a reasonable height over pedestrian walkways; at worst, they're freeways, shoved in brutally.

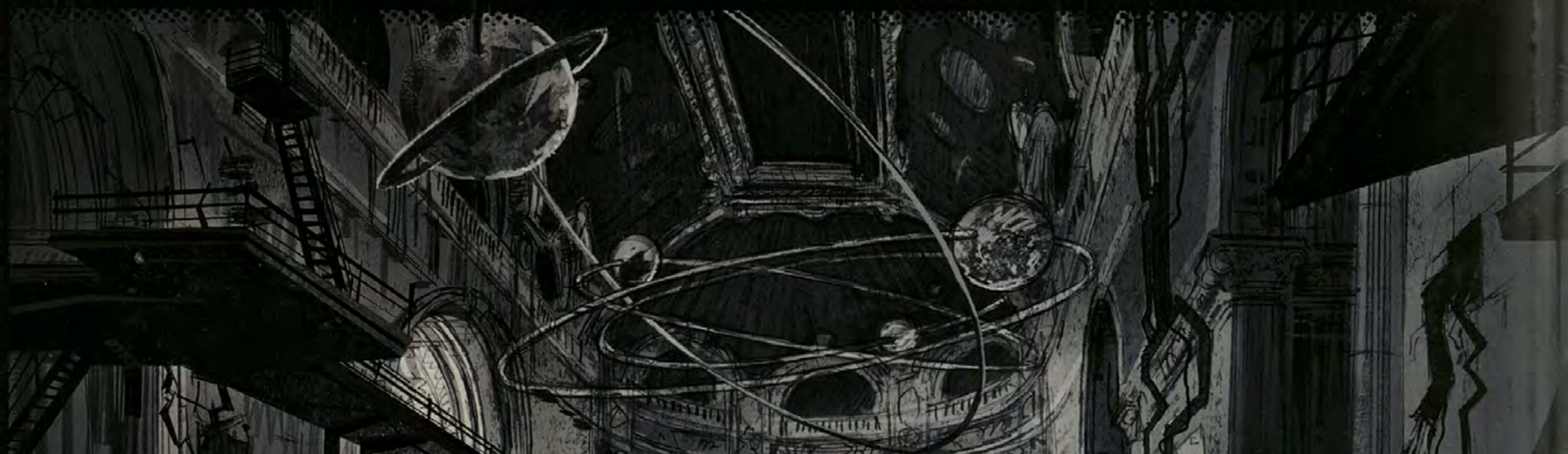
Most importantly, there's a bit of Vegas in the architecture of Metro City. The rollout of the Metro Man Museum—the essence of civic-hero worship taken to an extreme—indicates that from the city's perspective, superheroing and supervillaining are sometimes just two aspects of show business.

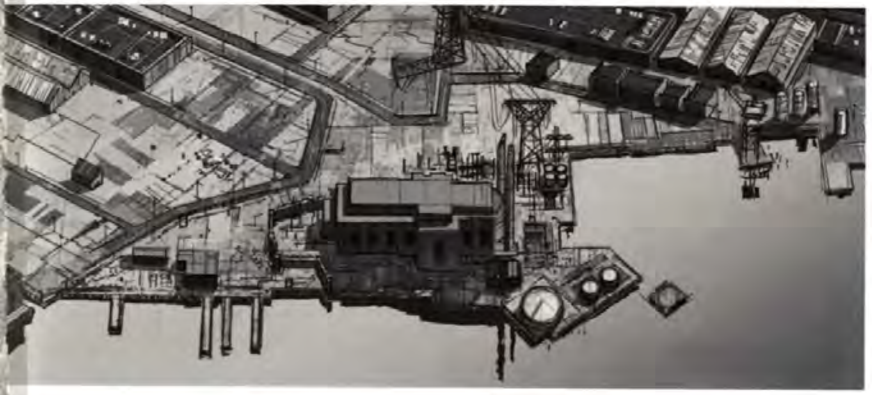


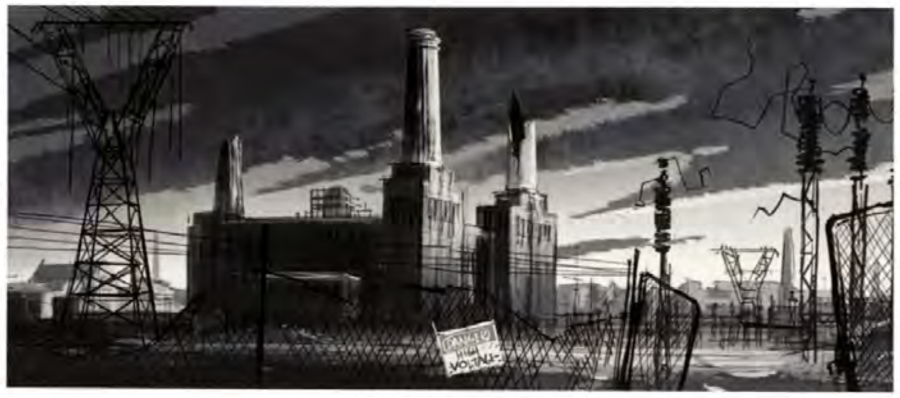

CINEMA THEATER

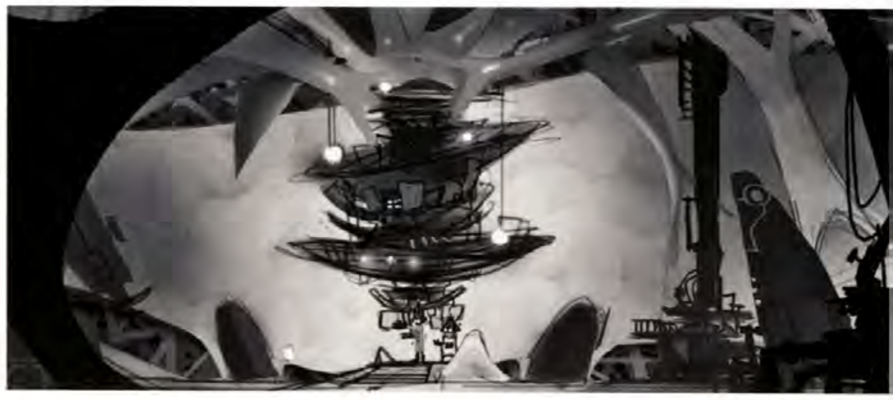


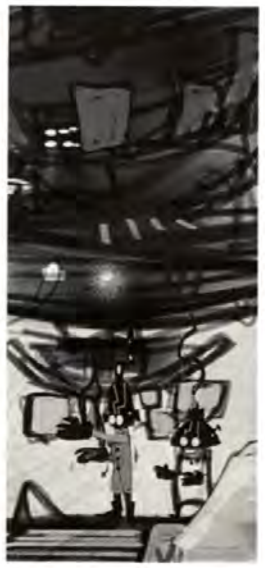












MEGAMIND'S LAIR

Production designer David James says that at first he envisioned Megamind's headquarters as a cross between Blofeld and Hugh Hefner—that is, between the hideouts of James Bond's archenemy and the mansion of *Playboy* magazine's founder.

James adds, "We implied more wealth" in earlier versions of the Megamind HQ. At that stage, what the team looked to was the work of Sir Ken Adam, the German-born production designer of seven James Bond films. Decades later, Adam's designs are still an ideal point of reference for multimillion-dollar bandits' lairs: hollow volcanoes, underwater mansions, and stainless-steel–jacketed oval offices, which are actually parabolas when seen from the eye of the camera. The visual development team took these cues to heart in their efforts to express ultimate dastardliness. In early versions, Megamind even had a Dr. No–style shark aquarium.

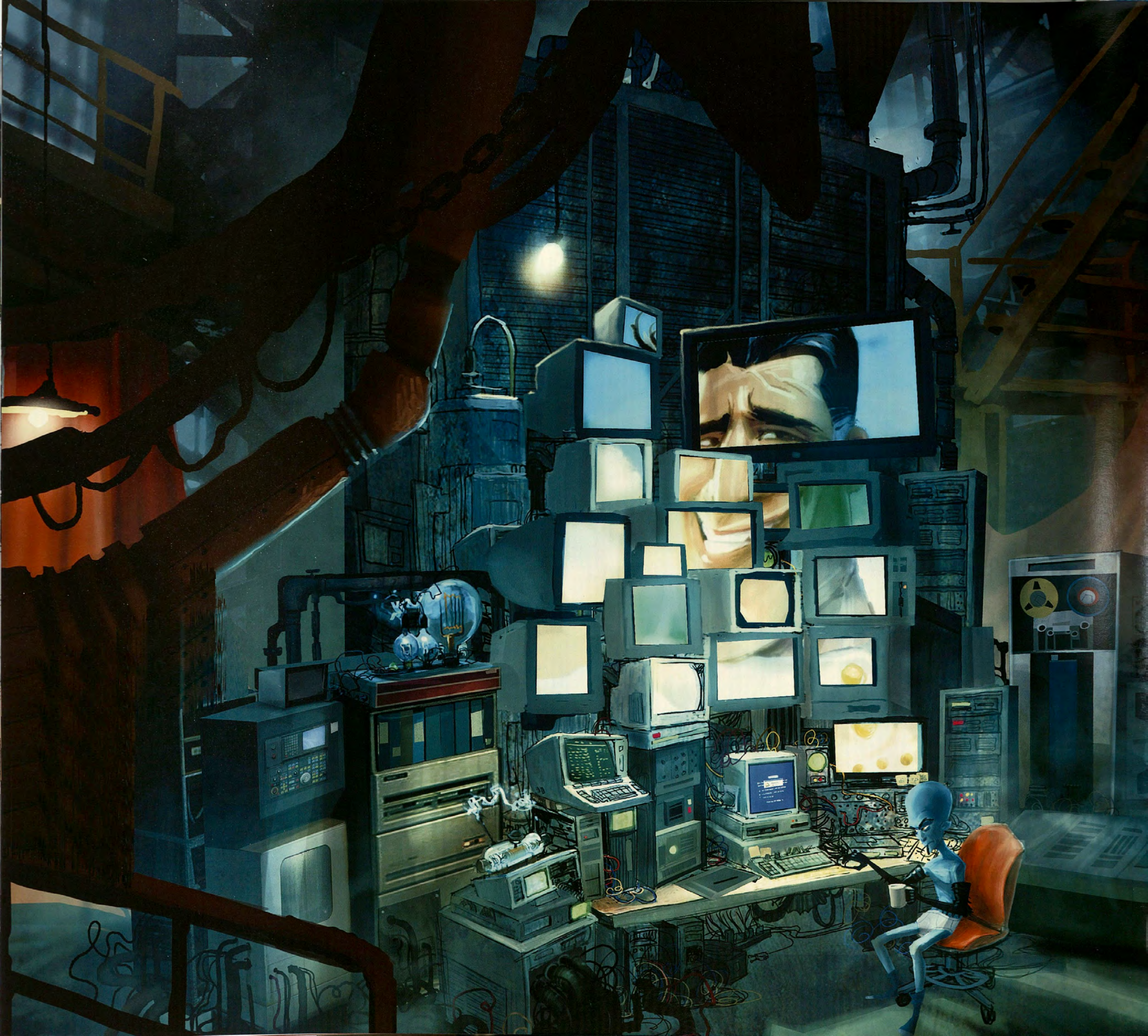
During the process of bringing Megamind to a more down-to-earth level, the lair changed from metal-lined executive suite to boiler room. What was once a penthouse was now a cavern: a way of showing a hands-on approach to villainy. It's hard work—or, as Megamind says, "It's easier to destroy than to create something that destroys."

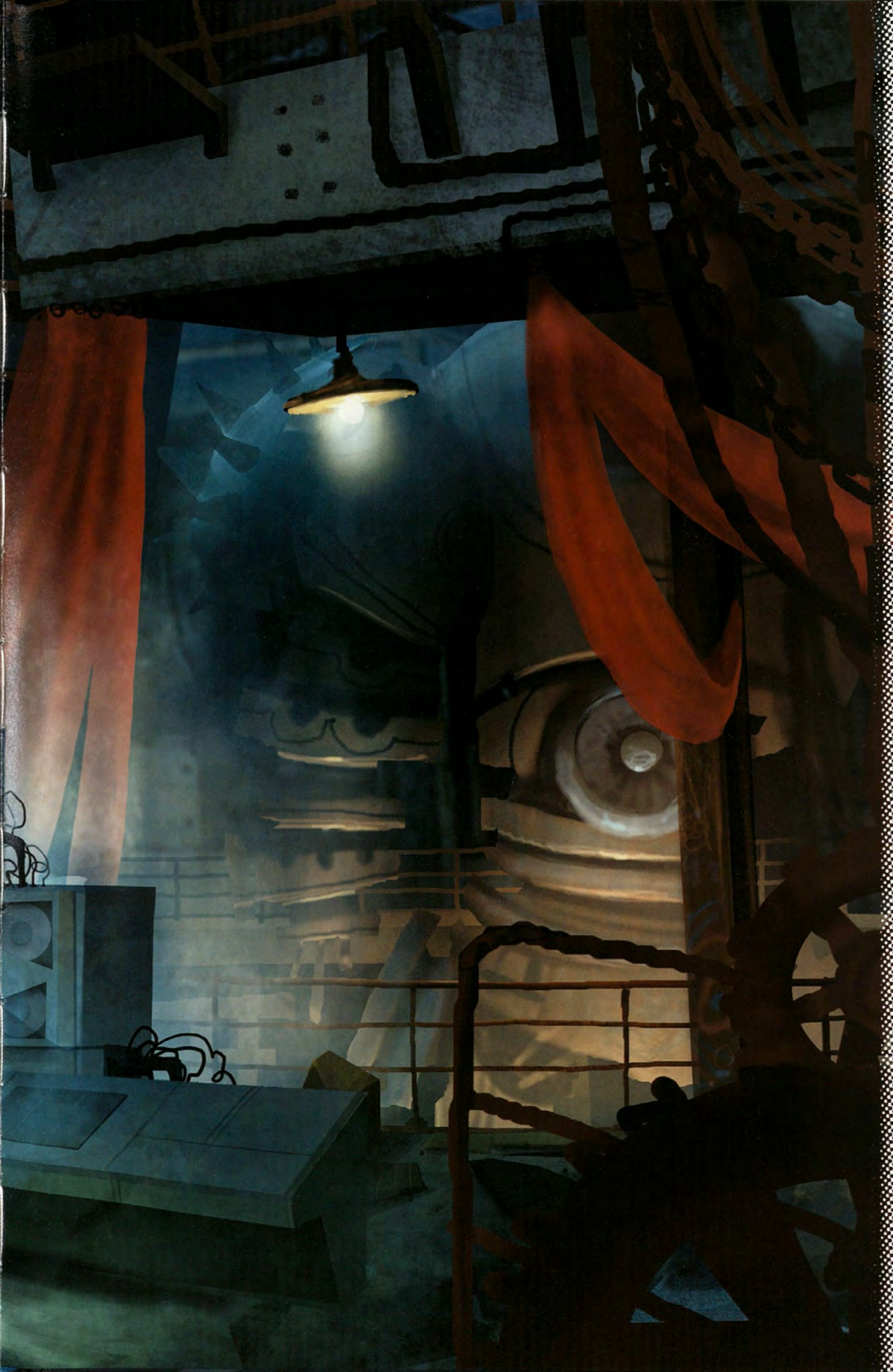
Director Tom McGrath conceived of the interior of Megamind's lair as the supervillain equivalent of the crazily tool-littered garage in the TV reality show *American Chopper*. McGrath also drew on a real-life historical rivalry from the annals of inventions and patents for material: the competition between the two pioneering geniuses of electricity. "My back-burner idea for this film," McGrath recalls, "was the Tesla/Edison story, and how Thomas Edison vilified Nicholas Tesla. I thought of Megamind as Tesla—misunderstood, yet with great potential. I used some of the Tesla influences in the conception of his surroundings: the Brainbots and the plasma."

Visual development artist Alex Puvilland's exterior drawings brought Megamind an appropriate building to house his infernal machines: a headquarters modeled on London's half-ruined Battersea Power Station, located in an unsavory waterfront corner of Metro City. A four-chimney, coal-fired power plant, the Battersea

"Megamind very much lives in little pockets of light, whereas Metro Man is this massive golden god. Metro Man is always revealed, always with full light shining on him. He is the public figure; Megamind is a very private figure."
—TOM MCGRATH, DIRECTOR

(opposite) MEGAMIND'S LAIR STUDIES ◦ Alex Puvilland; *(top panel, left to right)* MEGAMIND'S LAIR FROM ABOVE ◦ Alex Puvilland; MEGAMIND'S LAIR EXTERIOR ◦ Alex Puvilland; *(left)* MEGAMIND'S LAIR WITH DNA MACHINE ◦ Kory Heinzen





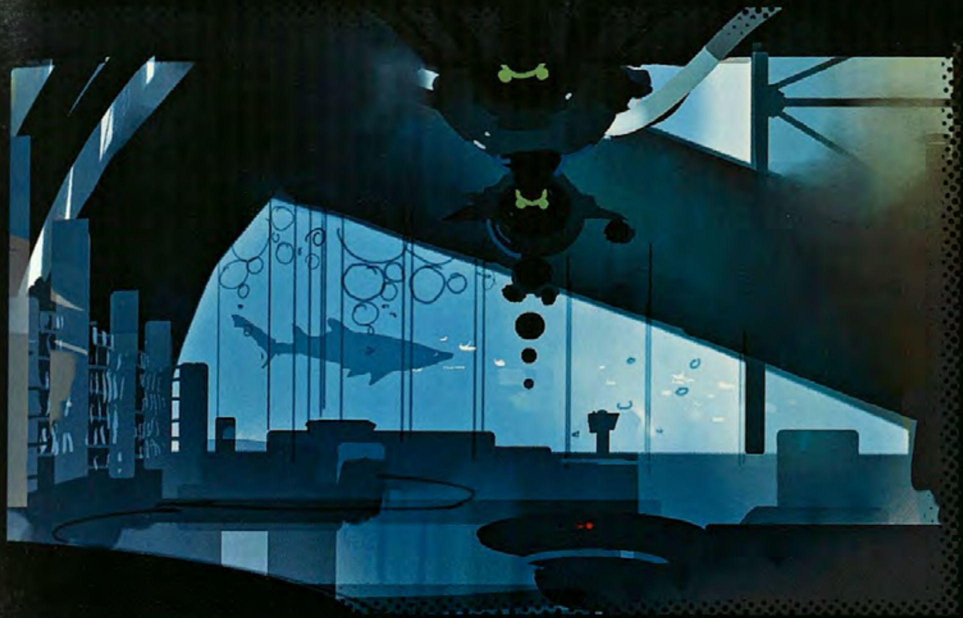
edifice is Europe's largest brick building—a dismayingly huge plant that has had a distinguished place in popular art. It stood in as the Tower of London in the version of *Richard III* starring Ian McKellen, set in the 1930s. It was the last museum on Earth in *Children of Men*. Perhaps most famously, Battersea was the mooring station for a pig-shaped barrage balloon that floated under brooding skies on the cover of Pink Floyd's *Animals* album.

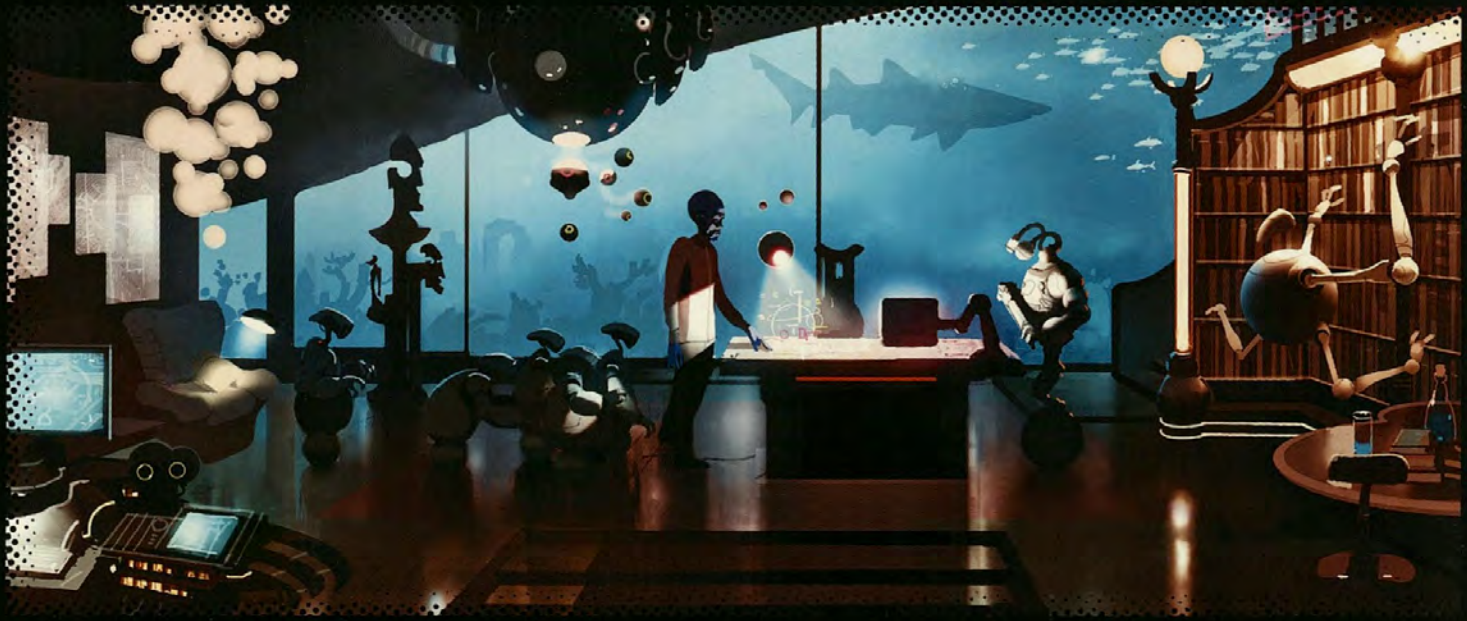
In *Megamind*'s version of this landmark power plant, Megamind's own wheels turn as he hatches his plots among junked dynamos and turbines, under an orrery—a mechanized mobile consisting of celestial bodies—dangling from the ceiling, as a reminder of his outer-space origins. The essential visual idea, in this dim, purple-lit industrial cavern full of giant robot parts and mysterious machines, is one of solitude: where the criminal genius masterminds his many creations and inventions as part of his next plan to astonish the world.

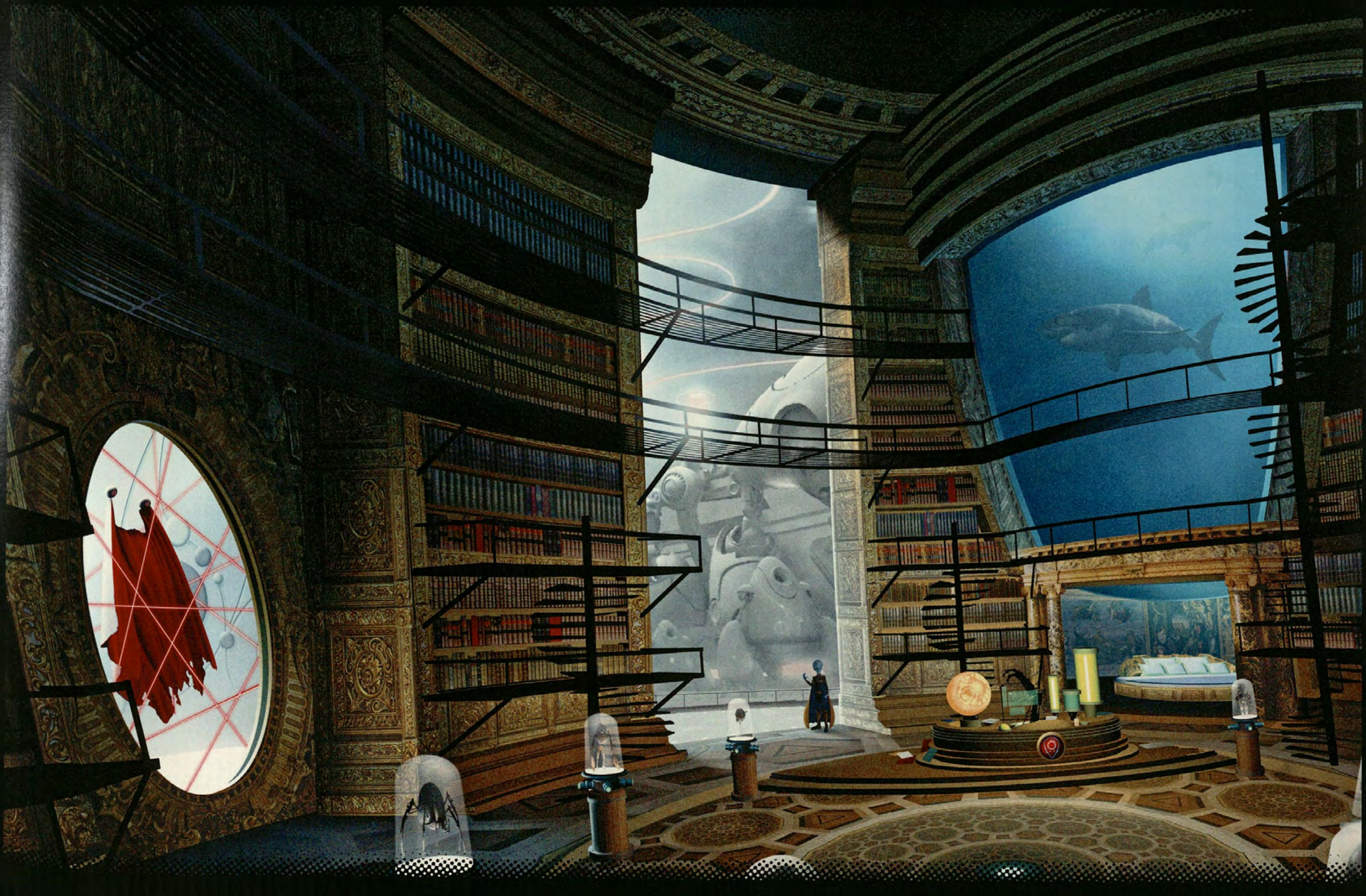
Art director Tim Lamb gives us a tour of the hideout: "In it you see countless ideas and instruments of villainy and robot projects . . . there are devices he's constructed and that he's trying to repair. All alone except for these mechanical companions, Megamind and his lair are estranged, located far outside of Metro City."

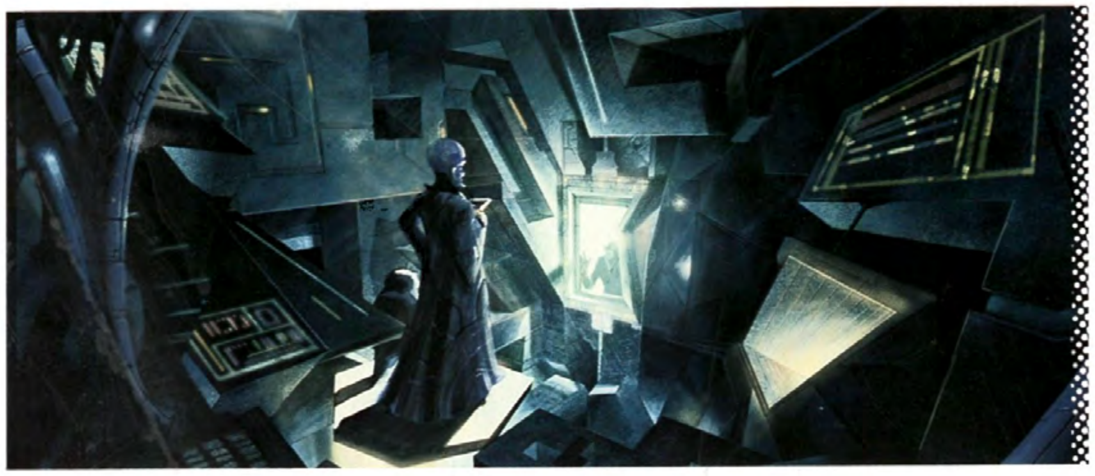
"As a character, Megamind is all about the chaos of creation," David James adds. "The whole visual language that surrounds him is parts and bits of stuff. That's why his whole lair is an abandoned power plant."

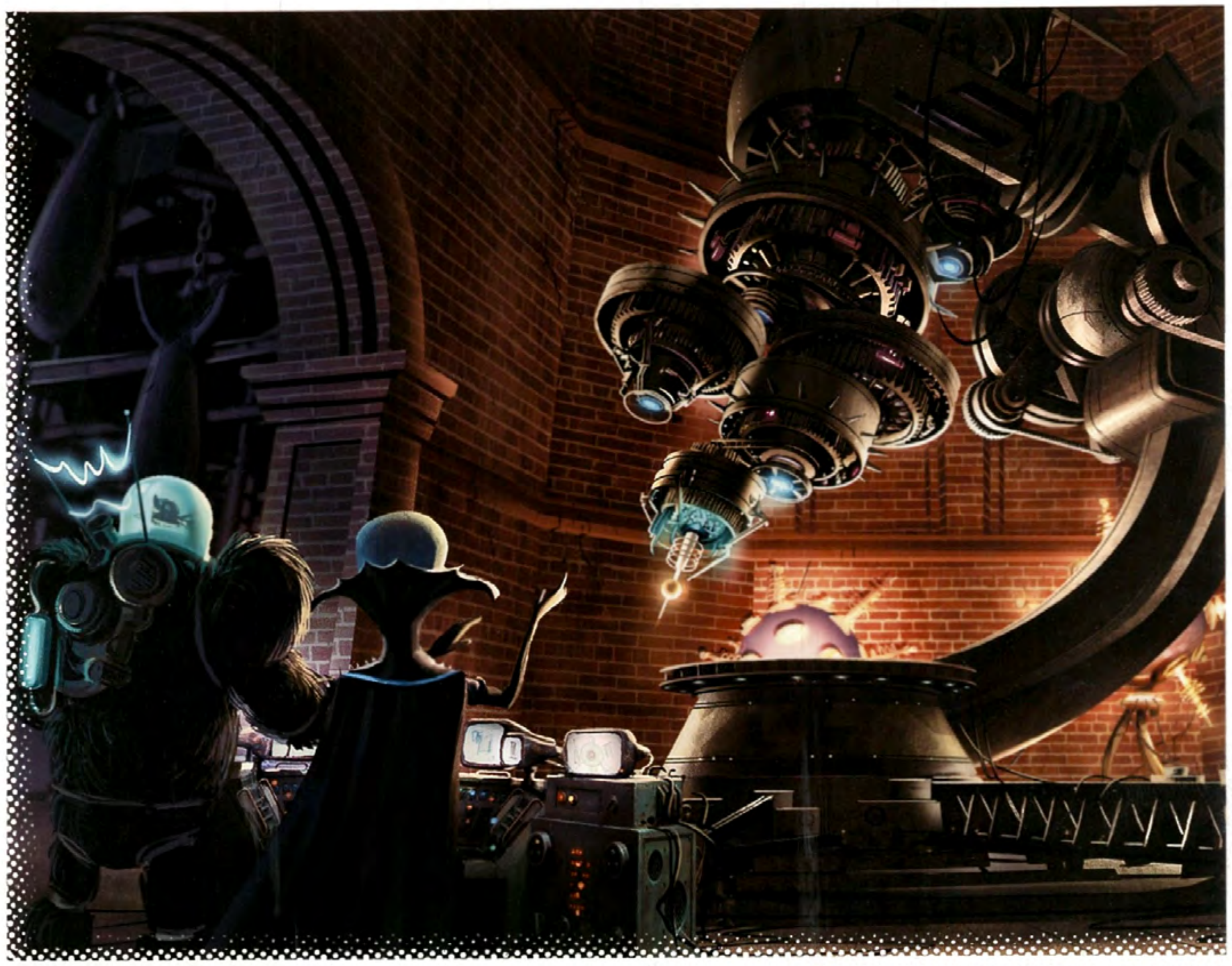
(left) MEGAMIND'S WORK STATION ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(following page left)* MEGAMIND'S LAIR STUDY ◦ Alex Puvilland; *(following page right, top row)* MEGAMIND'S LAIR ◦ Dermot Power; *(following page right, bottom)* MEGAMIND'S LAIR ◦ Pierre Olivier Vincent



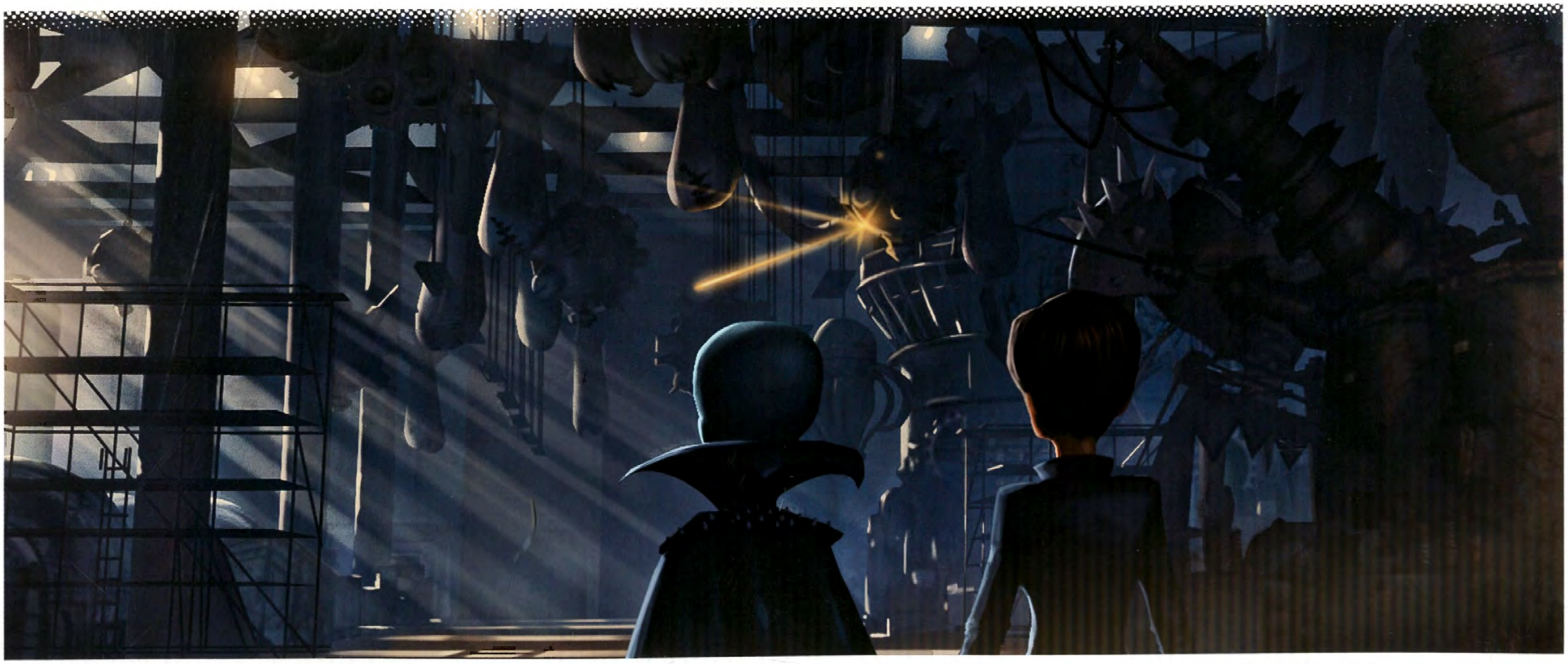




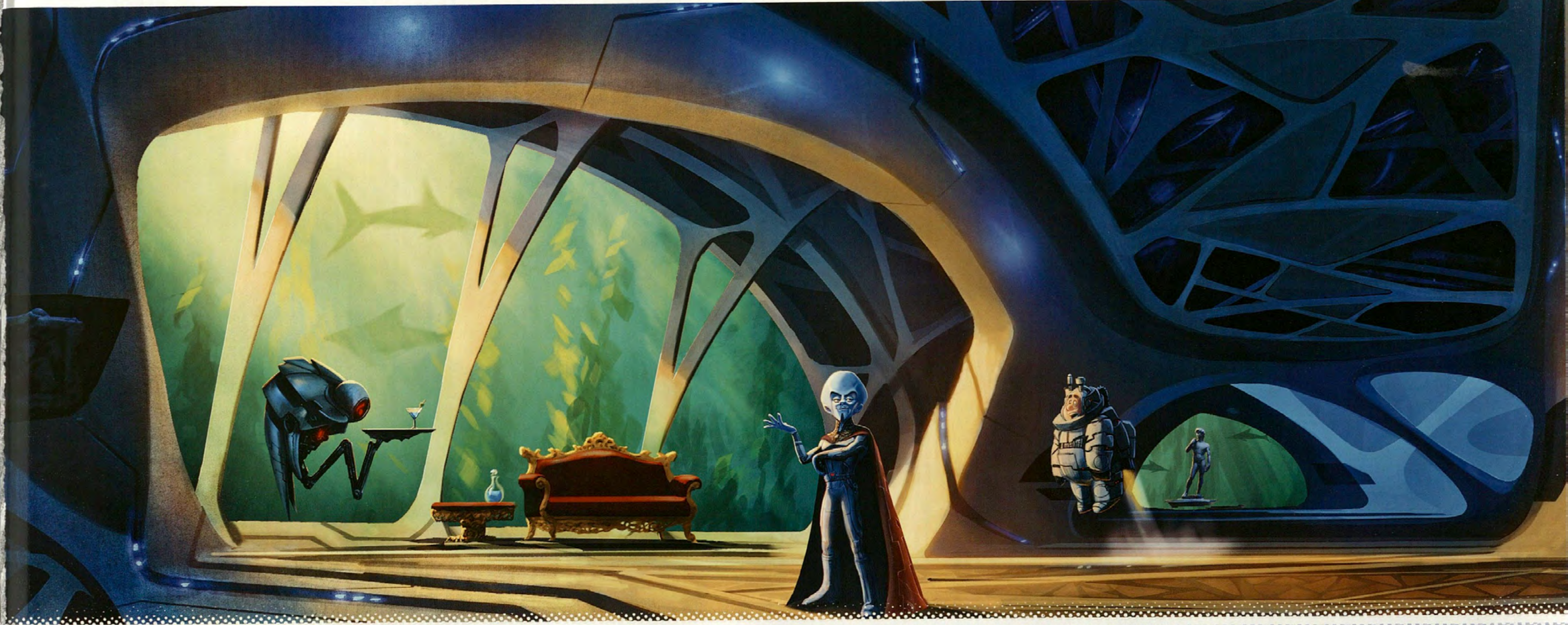


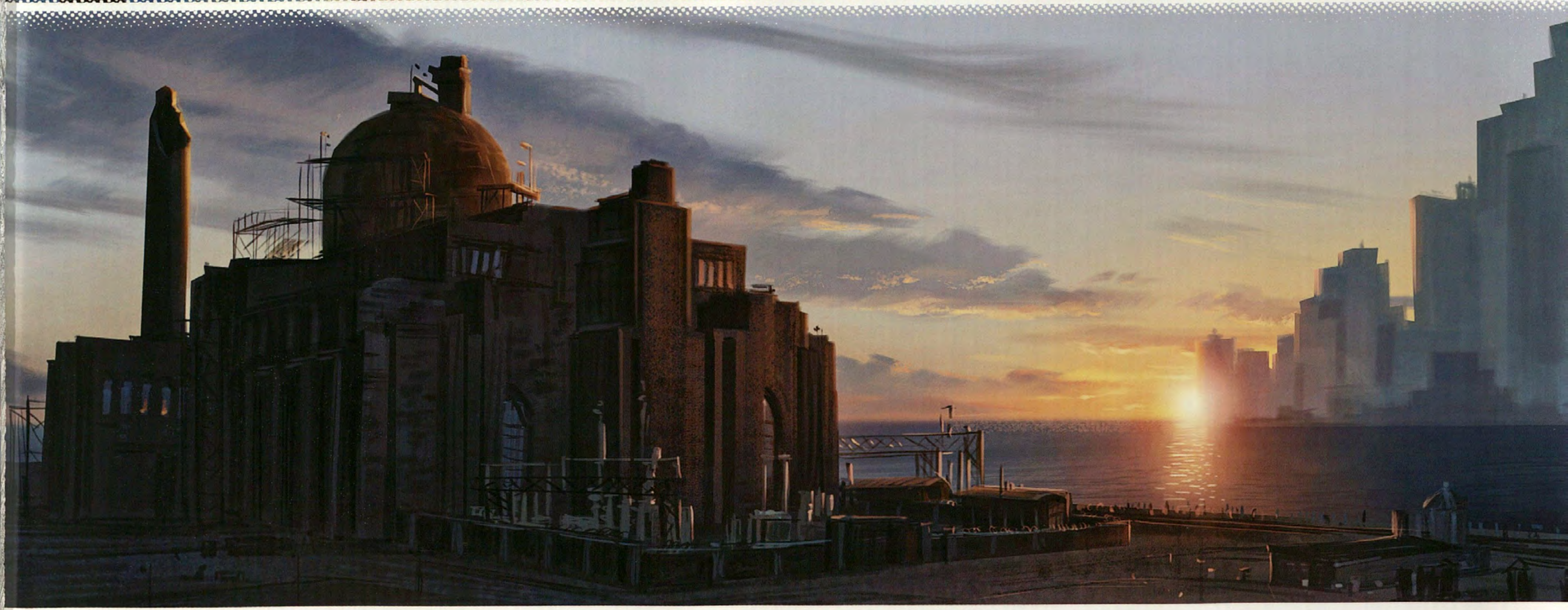


> "We started to see Megamind as the underdog, that kind of kid that has everything go wrong for him. When Tom came up with the idea for the rock and roll/chopper/junkyard vibe, it was fun to combine all these ideas together."
>
> —DENISE CASCINO, PRODUCER

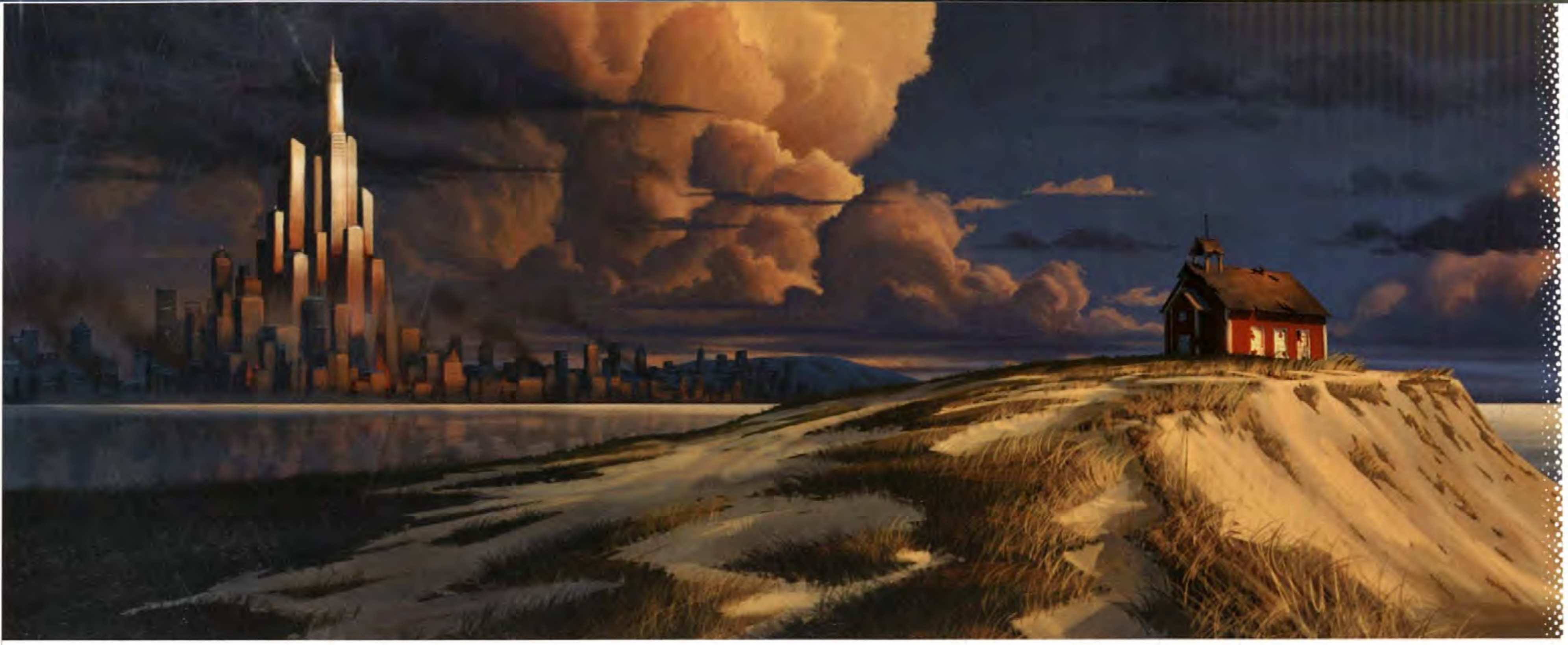


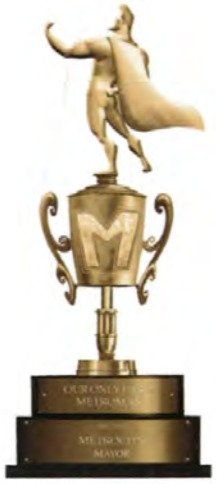
(top left) MEGAMIND'S LAIR ◇ Guillaume Aretos; *(top right)* DNA MACHINE ◇ Ruben Perez; *(above)* MEGAMIND & ROXANNE WATCH BULLET ◇ Erwin Madrid





(top) MEGAMIND'S LIVING QUARTERS ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(above)* SUNRISE OVER LAIR EXTERIOR ◦ Erwin Madrid





METRO MAN'S PAD

The leading celebrity in Metro City is not just a superhero but also an heir to a fortune, since he was adopted by a wealthy couple at birth. "He's not a humble guy," production designer David James emphasizes.

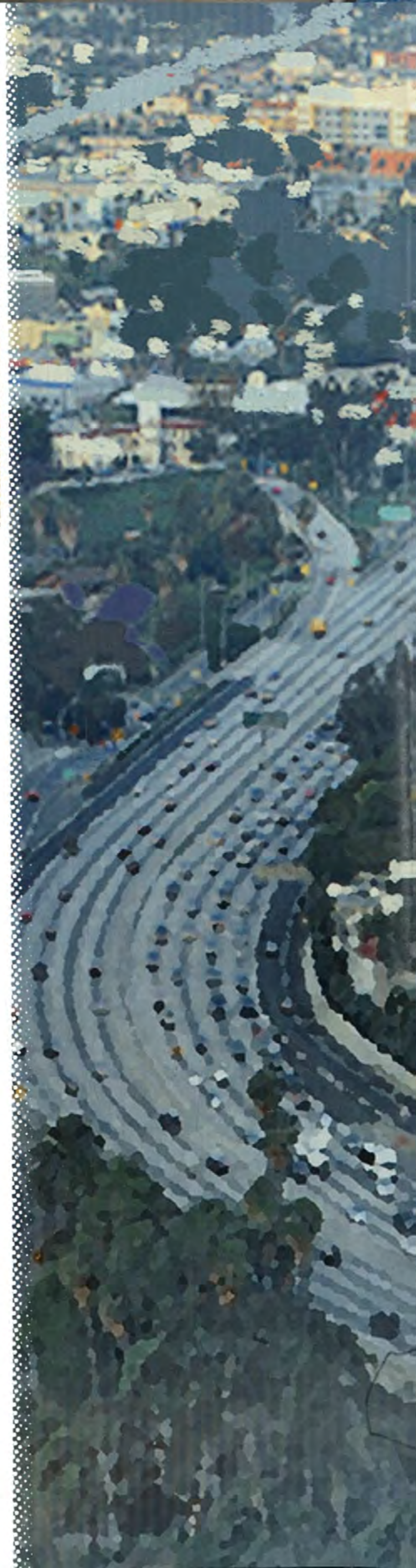
Treasures abound in Metro Man's trophy room: seized robots, including a robot dinosaur, plus flying saucers and a few confiscated nuclear warheads. The greatest treasure, though, as Metro Man might argue, is himself.

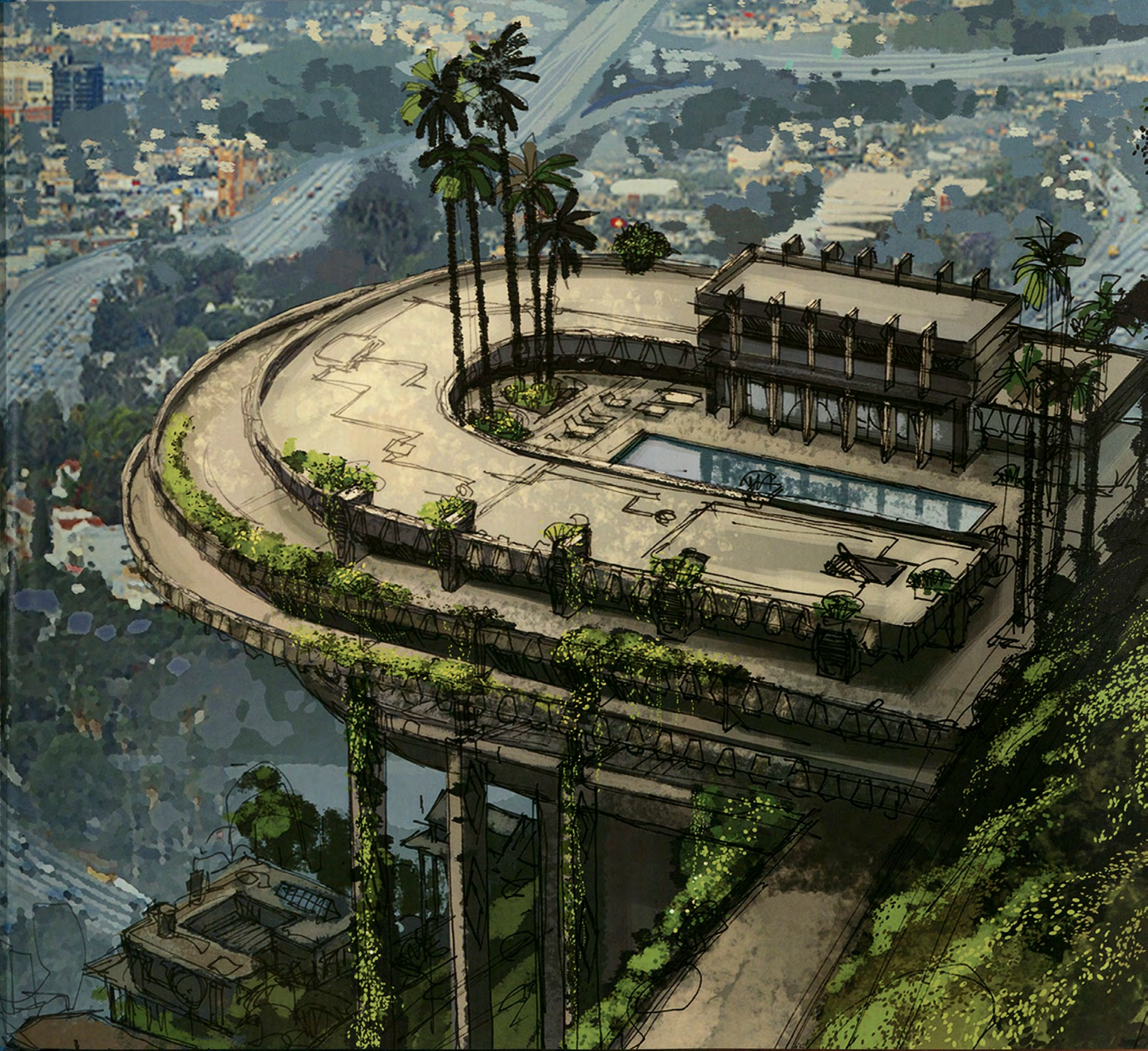
In visual development artist Ruben Hickman's drawing, Metro Man lounges in his underwear: a rare vulnerable moment for an invulnerable figure.

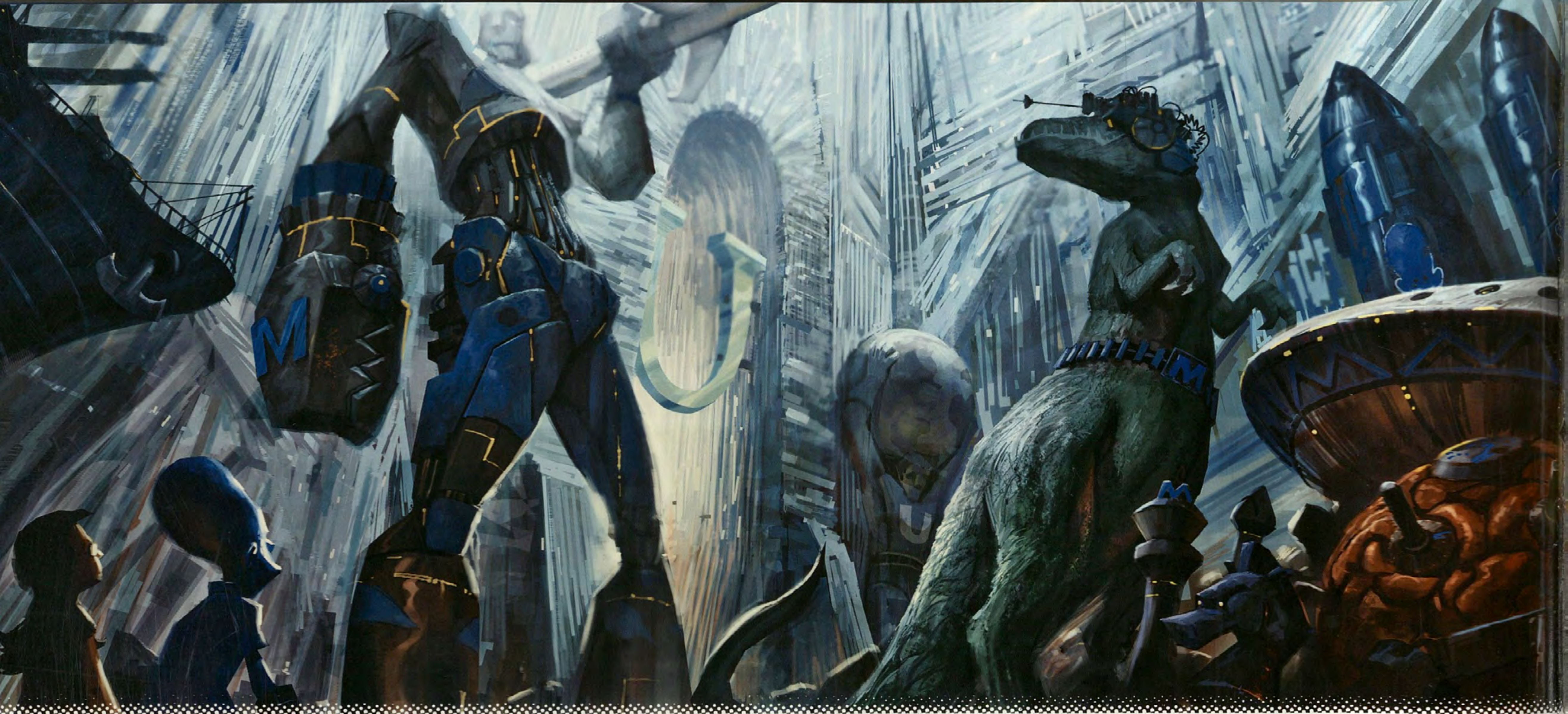
Visual development artist Peter Maynez's exterior studies for Metro Man's home sums up (literally) stilted, southern California excess: cliff-clinging architecture limited only by the imagination, the wallet, and the insurance liability. The landscape is one of those steep seismic canyons, complete with a monstrous twenty-lane freeway curling at the base. The roll of the land suggests Cahuenga Pass, or maybe the valley of the Los Angeles River right where it hits the Pasadena foothills. In early versions of the script, when Metro Man was called Uberman, the 50,000-square-foot mansion was built in the shape of a giant letter U: a monogrammed mansion that testifies to one giant ego. This palm-tree-studded pad appears to be half of the Santa Anita racetrack, complete with grandstand—a perfect place for a grandstander.

Ultimately, the final Fortress of Seclusion looks vastly different than any of these exploratory designs. In the final film, Metro Man's lair is hidden beneath the school he and Megamind attended: a place that has great significance in the mutual past of the supposed hero and the not-quite villain.

(top) METRO MAN'S LAIR EXTERIOR ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(left)* TROPHY ◦ Chin Ko; *(right)* METRO MAN'S LAIR ◦ Peter Maynez; *(following page left, top & bottom)* METRO MAN'S LAIR STUDIES ◦ Ruben Hickman; *(following page right, top)* METRO MAN'S LAIR ◦ Ruben Perez; *(following page right, bottom)* METRO MAN'S LAIR ESTABLISHING SHOT ◦ Ruben Perez



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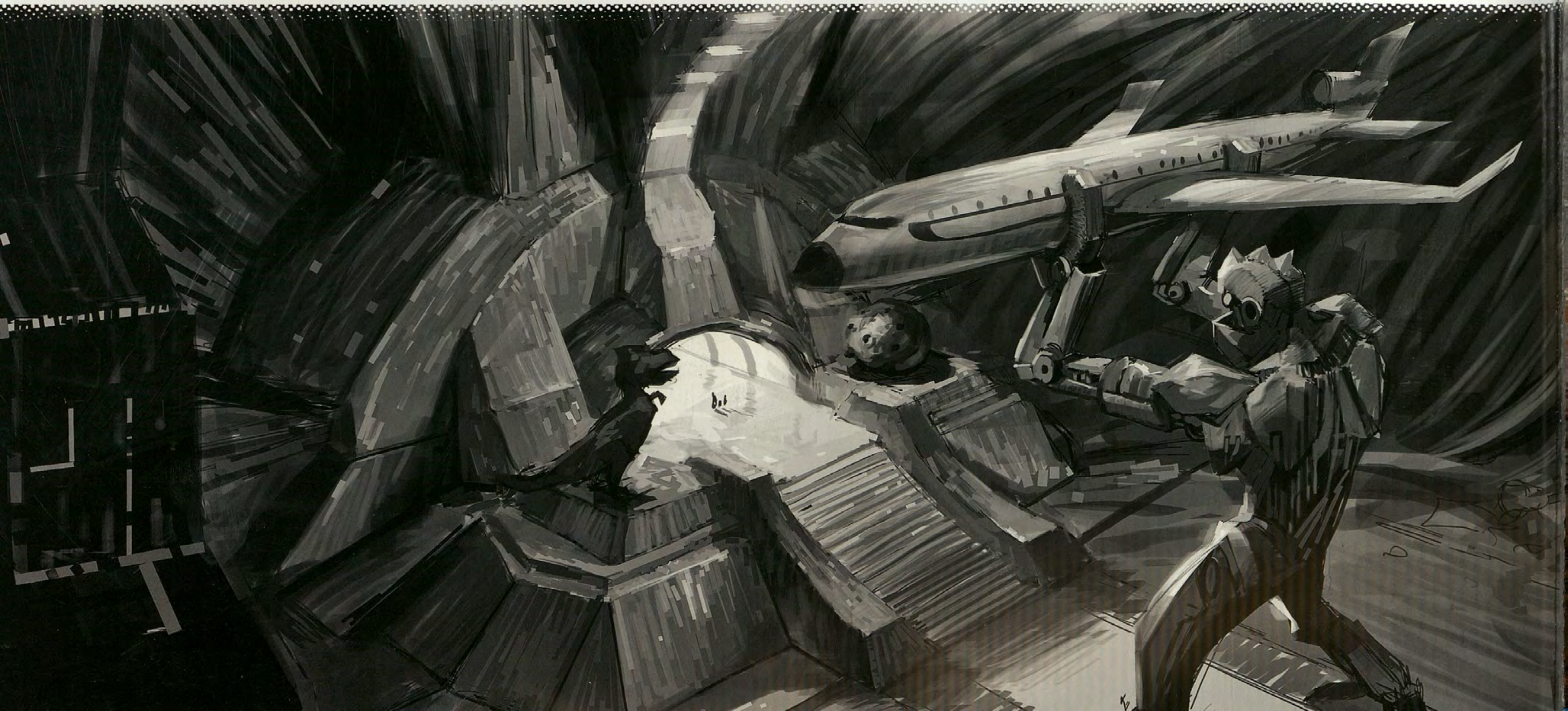

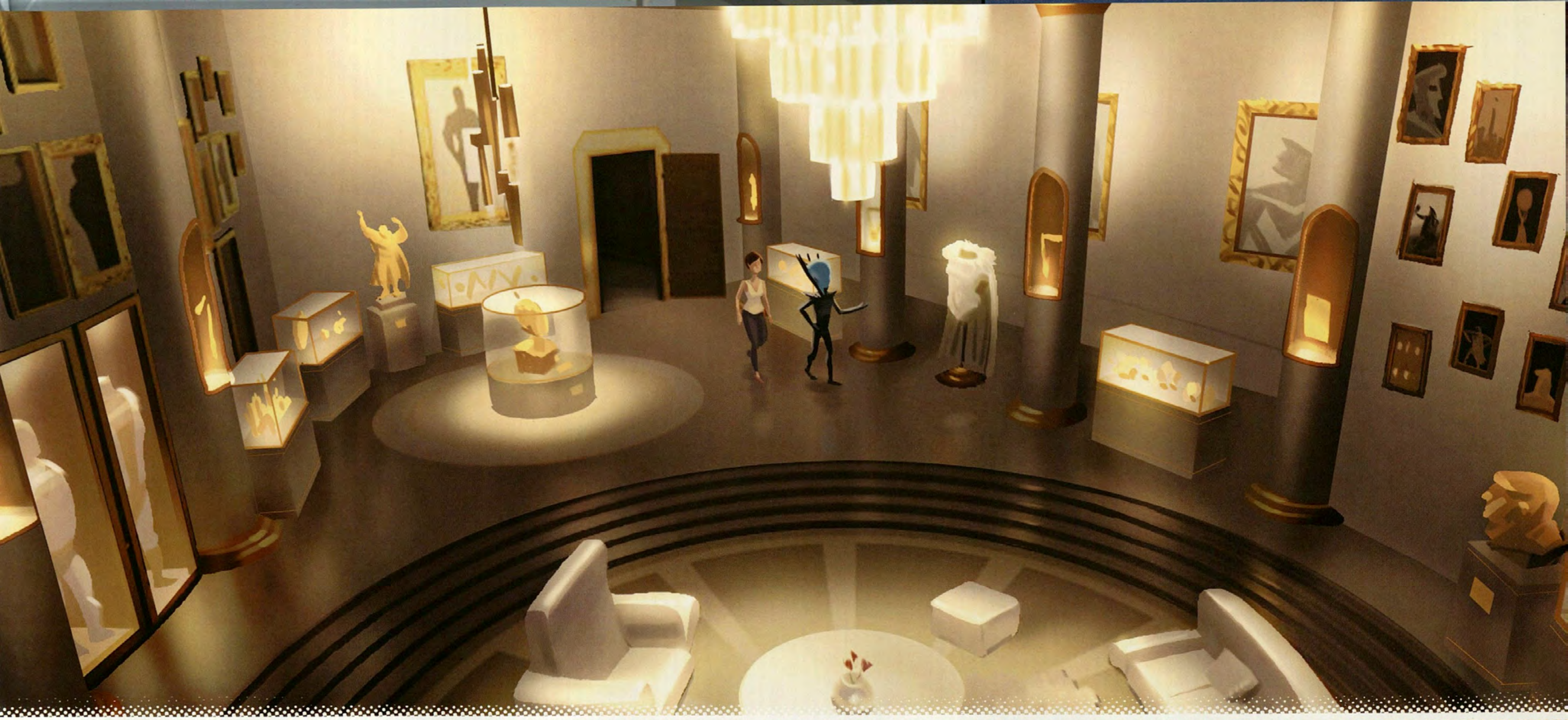

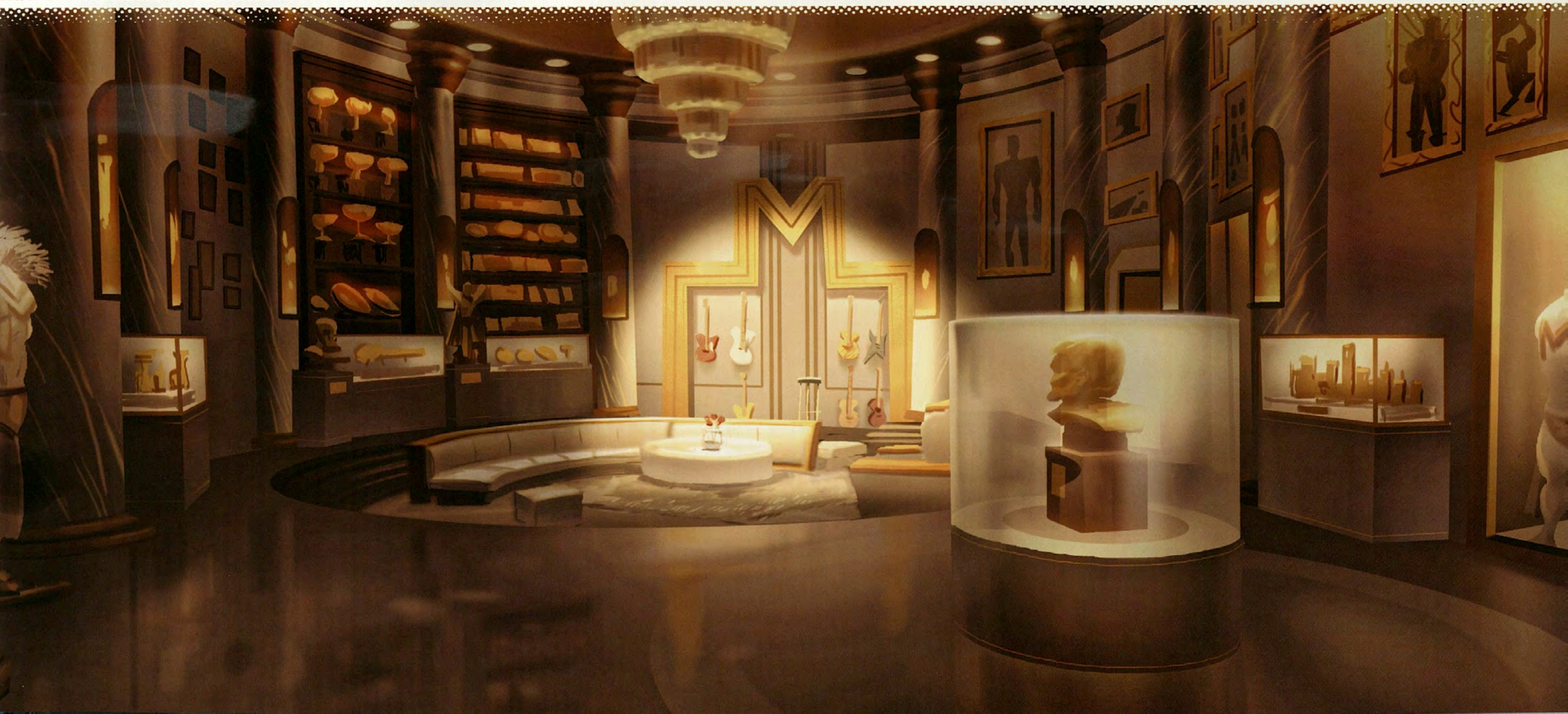

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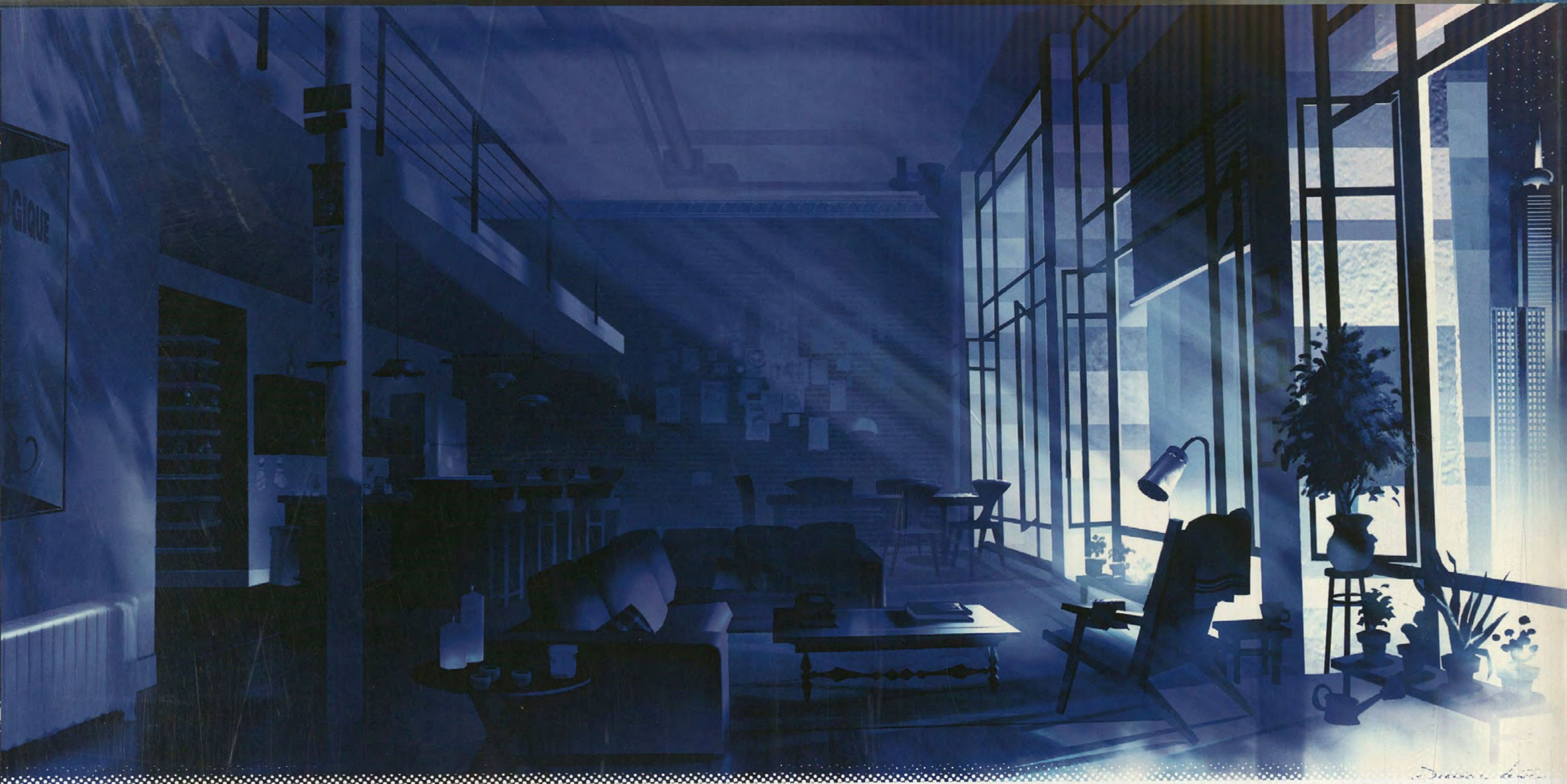
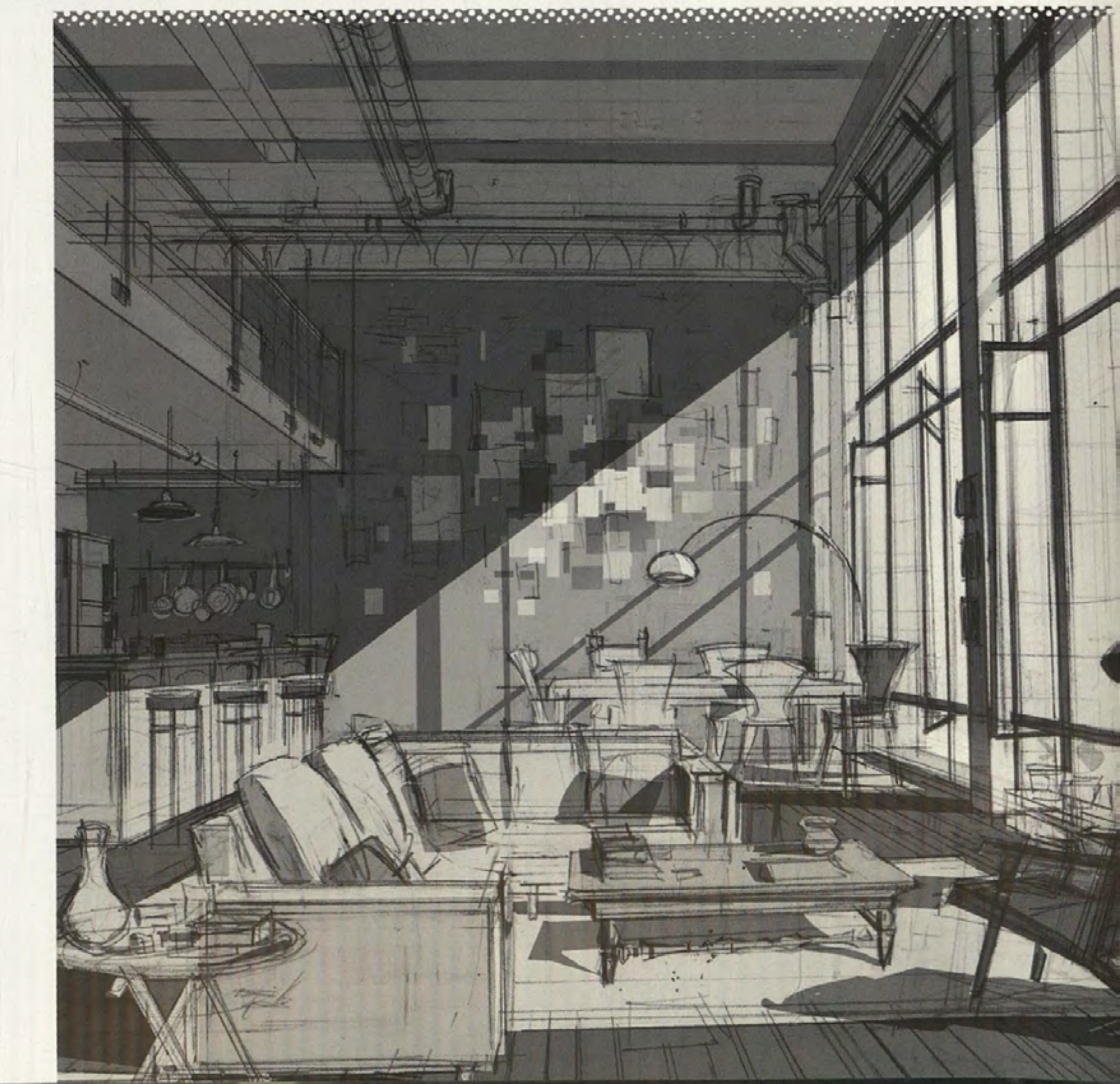
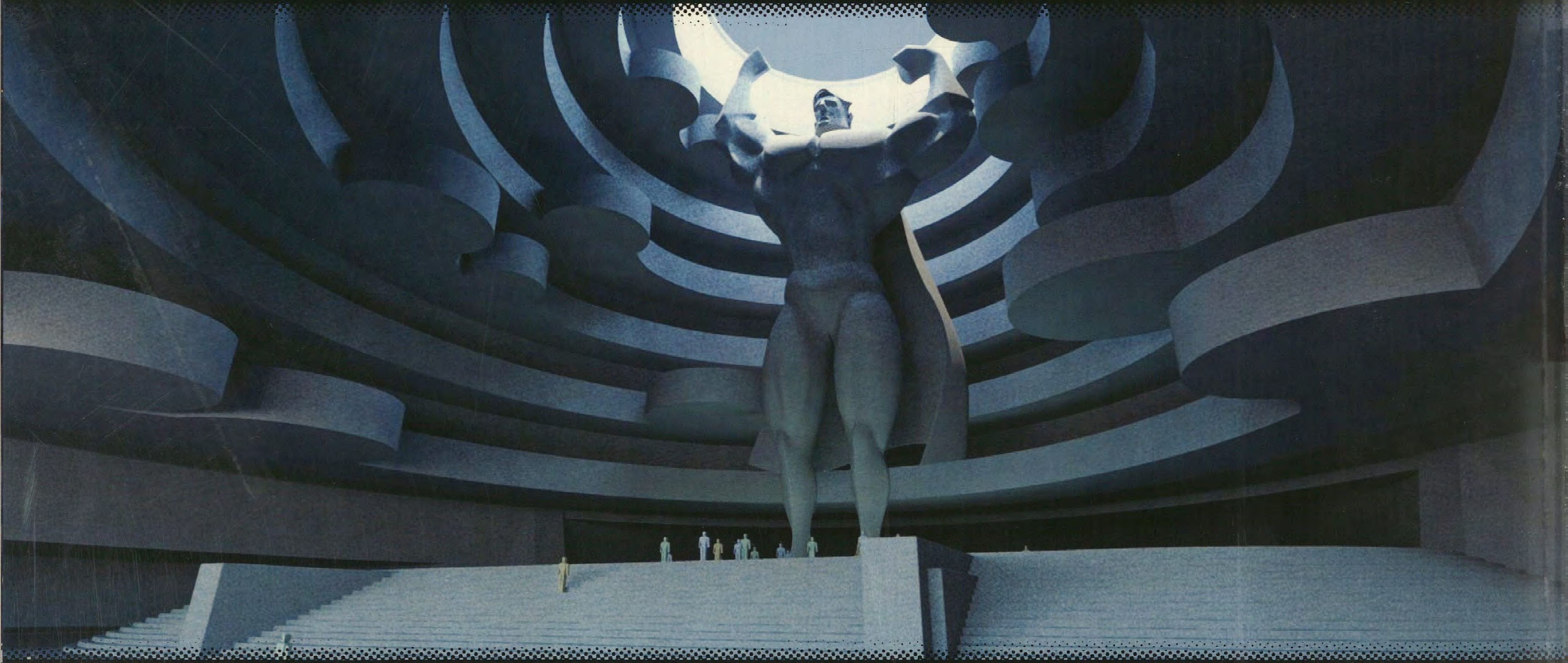


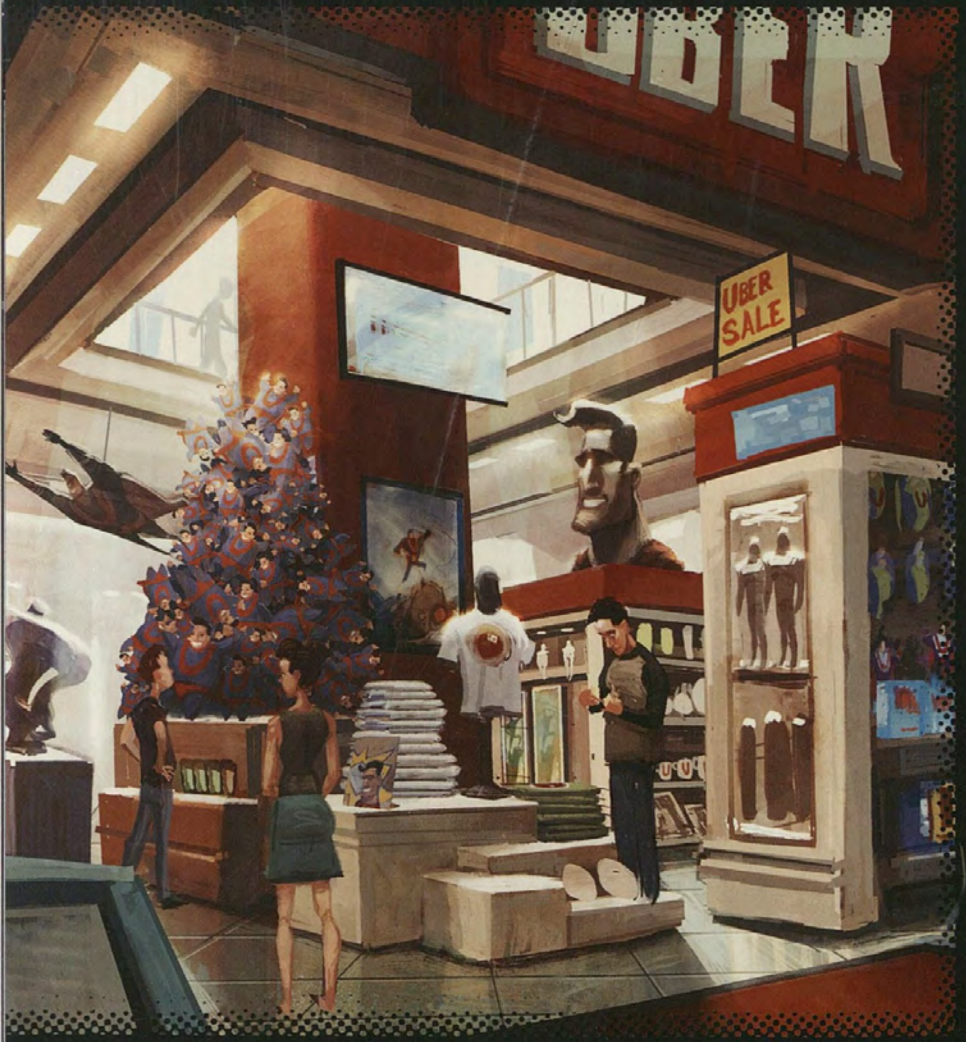
ROXANNE'S LOFT

High ceilings, restrained good taste, and plenty of negative space are the qualities of this split-level skyscraper apartment. The salient feature is an idea wall, where Roxanne stays up nights, trying to figure out the secret behind the arrival of Tighten, the new hero in town. The large windows provide natural light, and they're perfect for the arrival of airborne guests.

(top) ROXANNE'S LOFT AT NIGHT ◆ Dominique Louis;
(right) ROXANNE'S LOFT SKETCH ◆ Alex Puvilland;
(opposite) ROXANNE'S IDEA WALL ◆ Erwin Madrid



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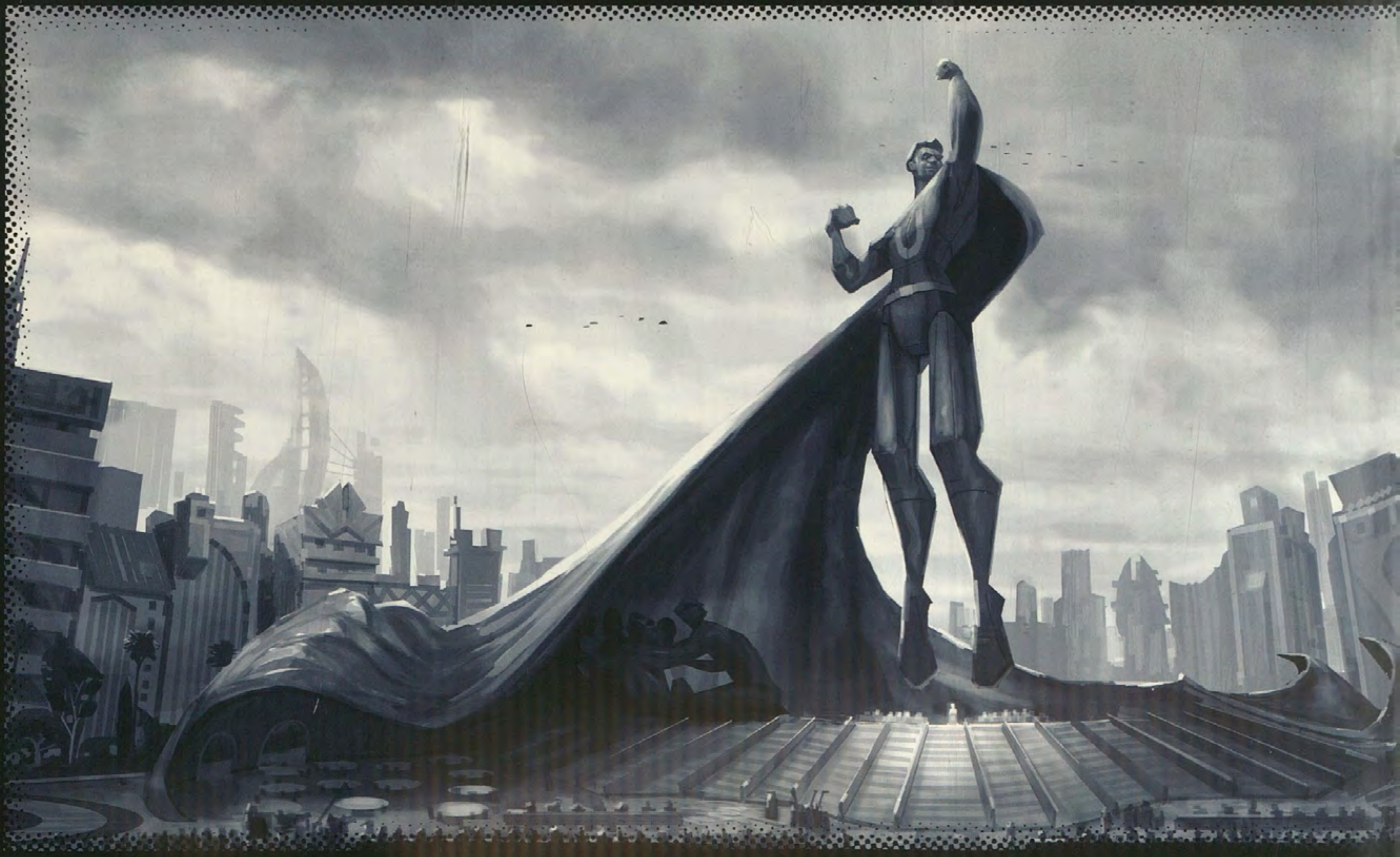
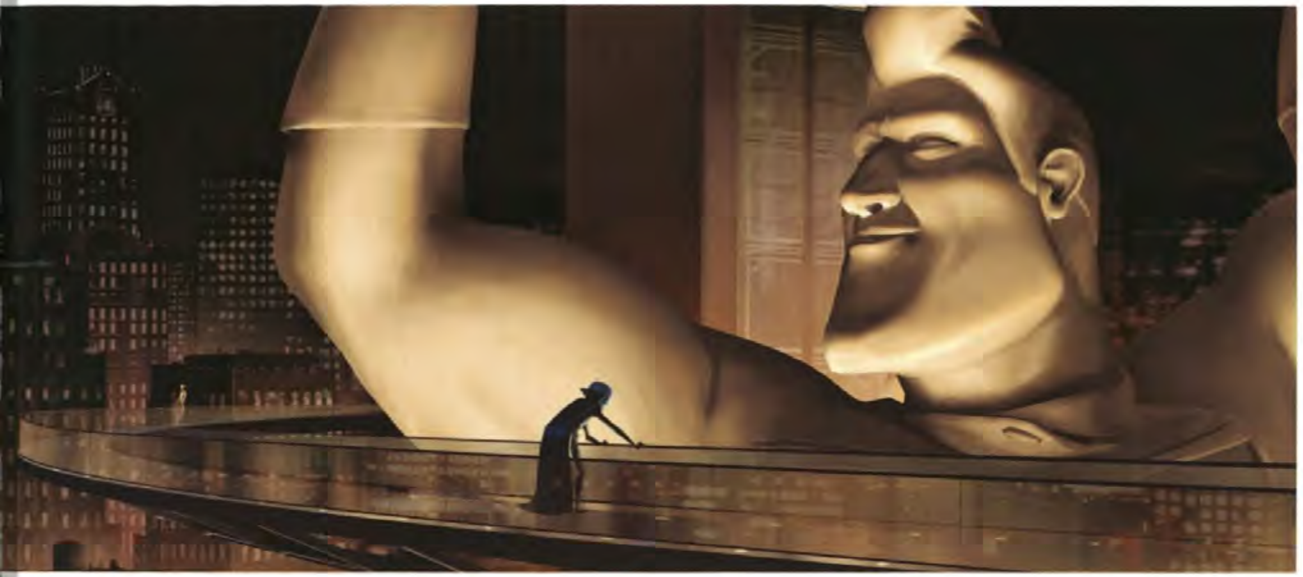
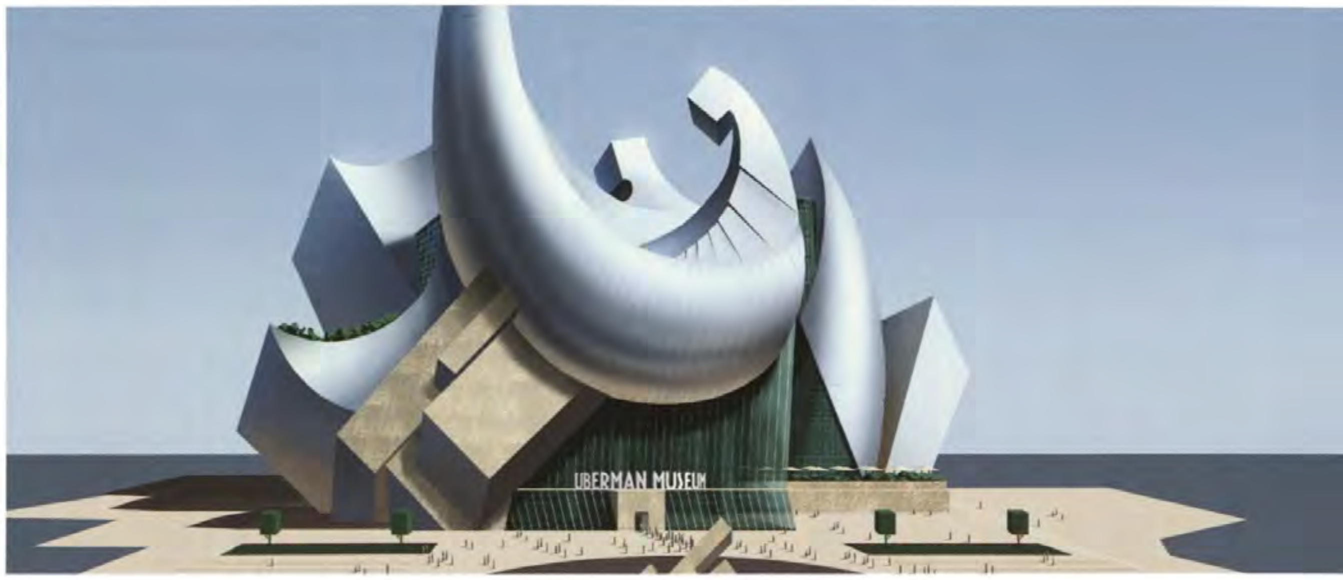
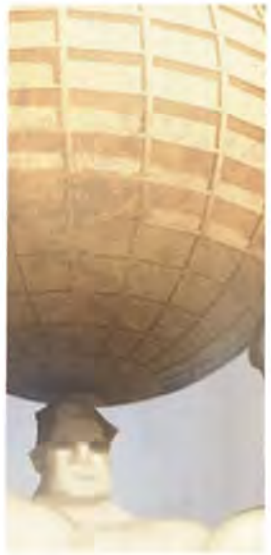








METRO MAN MUSEUM

As the embodiment of a great hero and an even greater ego, the filmmakers felt that the Museum of Metro Man should be a serious piece of monumental architecture. It needed to look big enough to interfere with bird migration—and to be a natural target for the wrath of Megamind.

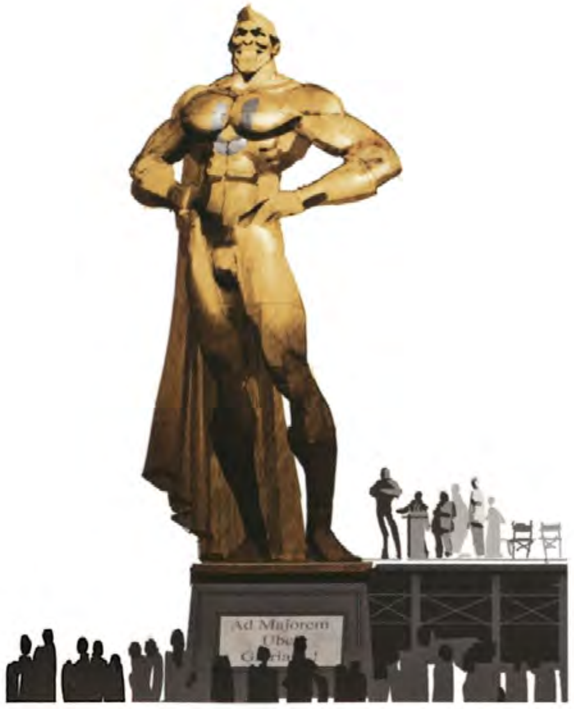
Early variations on this structure differ significantly. One has the towering Metro Man figure's mighty cape providing a Brasilia-worthy concrete avalanche that shelters a wavy modernist structure. In another version, the structure is a colossal statue of Metro Man, flanked by a pair of towers about several hundred feet high. The Metro Man colossus is posed in the act of having just power-lifted an enormous sphere, which contains the museum itself.

An interior shot has a slightly less colossal statue of you know who, shaking his biceps at the oculus—the hole in the ceiling that lets in natural light. The atrium, done up in the jazzy futurism of a forty-year-old business-class hotel, towers over the millions of faithful Metro Man fans who purchase souvenirs at the gift shop.

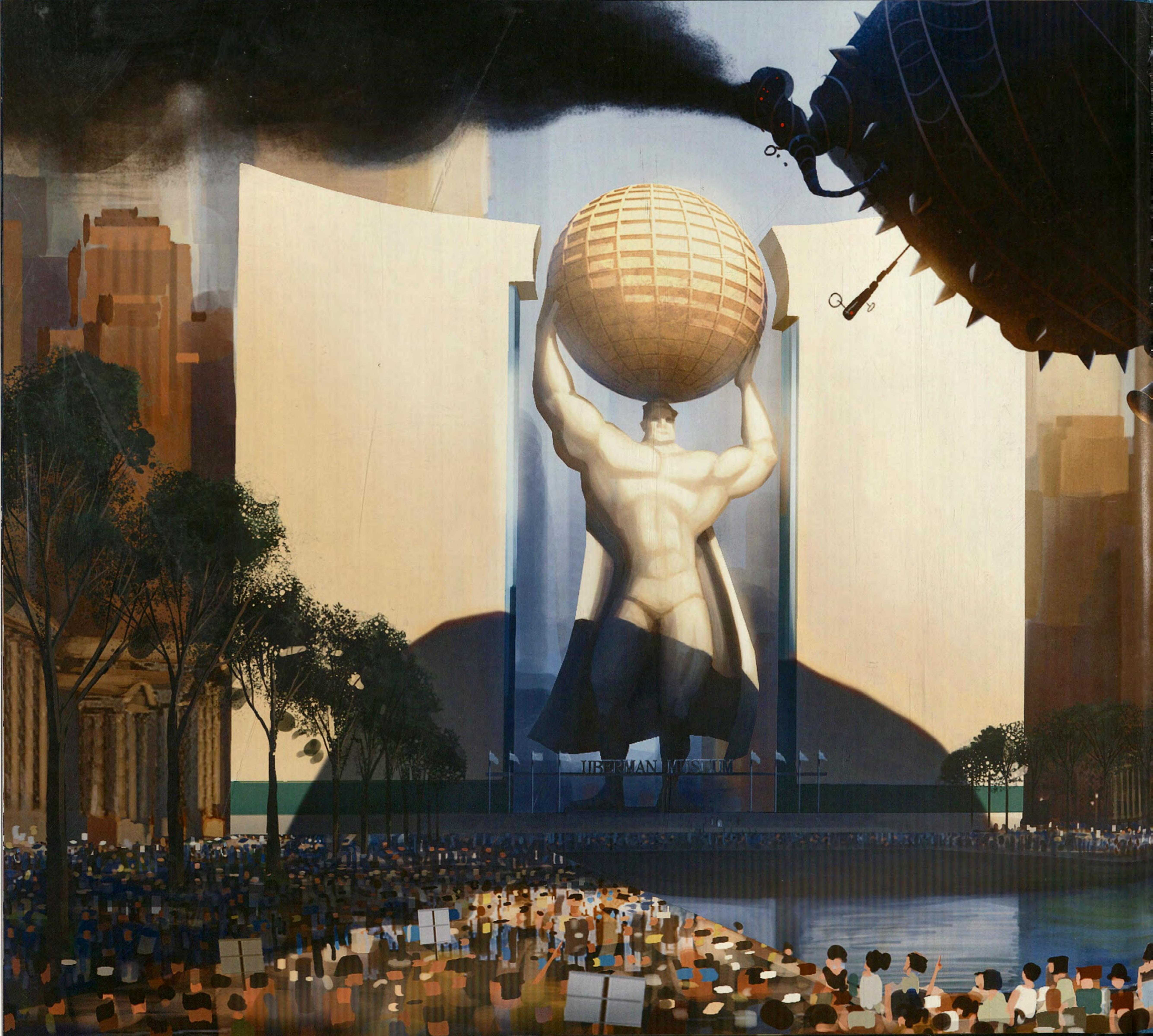
"The museum itself is actually the offspring of the Wynn [Las Vegas] casino and the collected works of Ayn Rand," says production designer David James. "It's meant to be vulgar under the guise of good design.

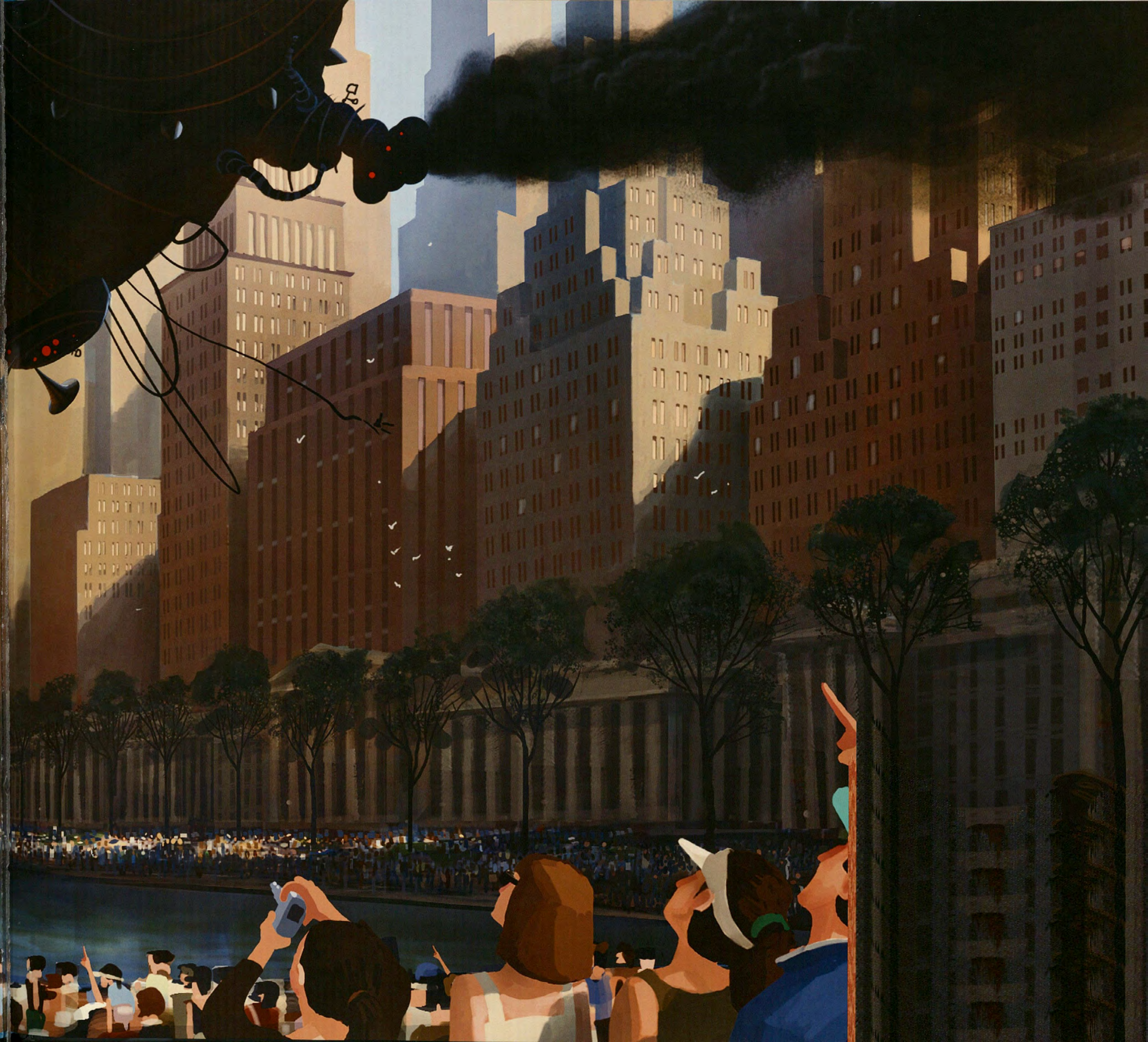
"The museum completely dominates the central Metro City plaza and was designed to cast a shadow over City Hall," he adds. "It perfectly reflects the vision of Metro Man: that he's just too much. And that too-muchness permeates everything he does."

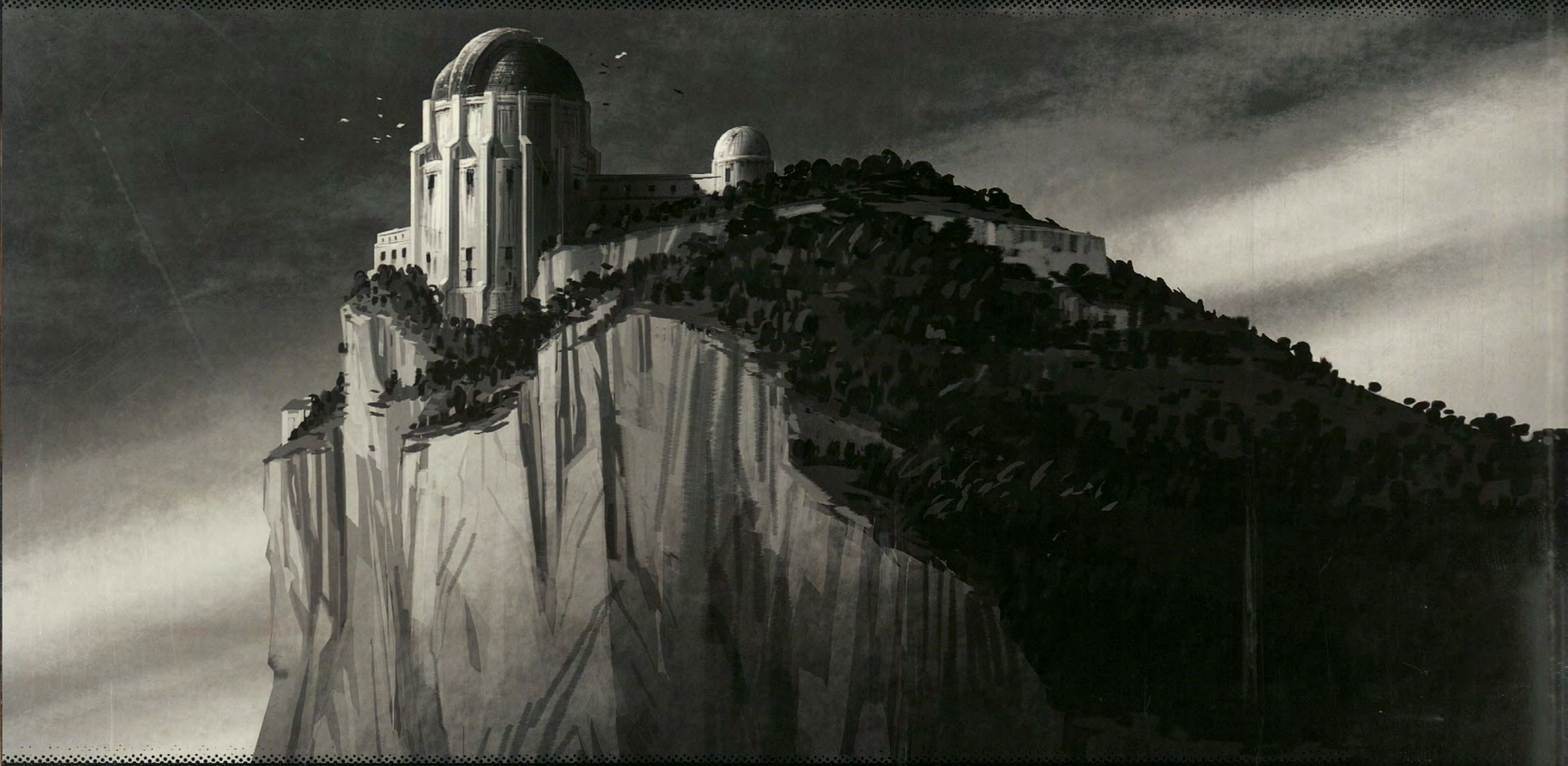
"If Howard Roark of *The Fountainhead* were building buildings today, they might look something like the Museum of Metro Man."
—DAVID JAMES, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

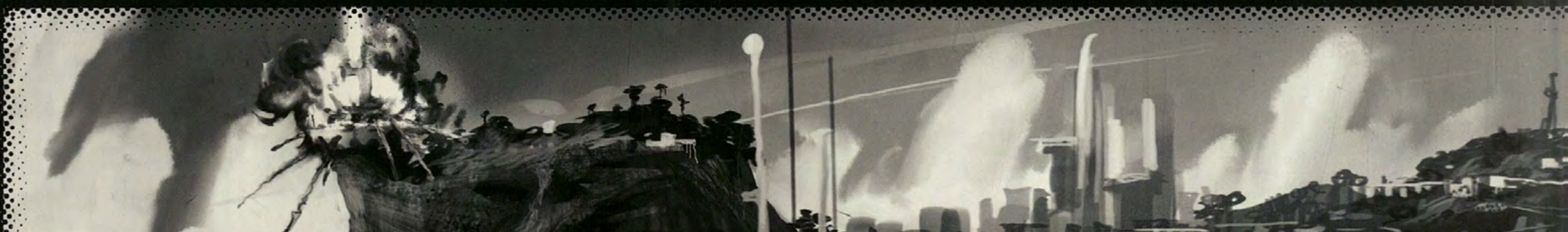


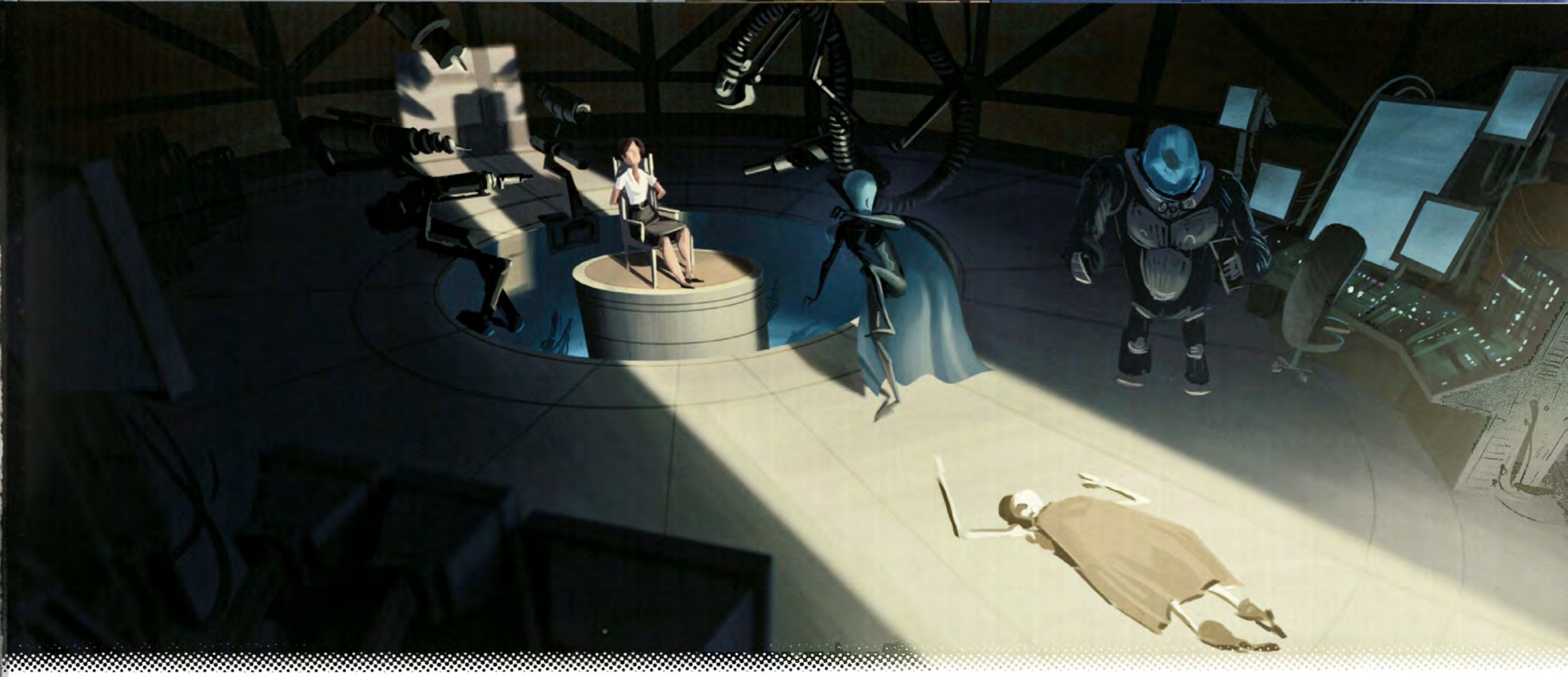
(opposite, top) METRO MAN MUSEUM ◦ Stan Seo; *(opposite, bottom left)* MUSEUM STORE ◦ Paul Sullivan; *(opposite, bottom right)* METRO MAN MEMORIAL ◦ Ruben Hickman; *(top left)* MEGAMIND VISITS MEMORIAL ◦ Ruben Perez; *(top right)* METRO MAN MUSEUM ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(above)* METRO MAN STATUE ◦ Dermot Power; *(following pages)* OPENING DAY ◦ Erwin Madrid

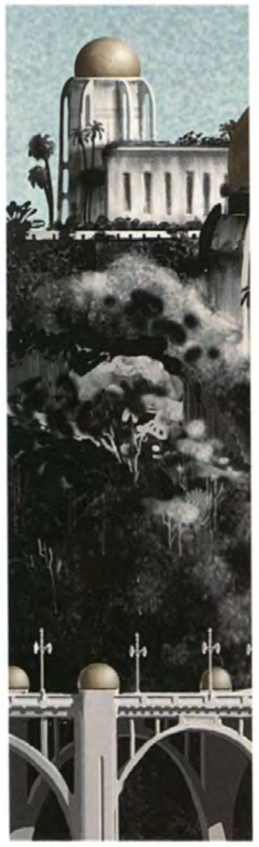

UBERMAN MUSEUM











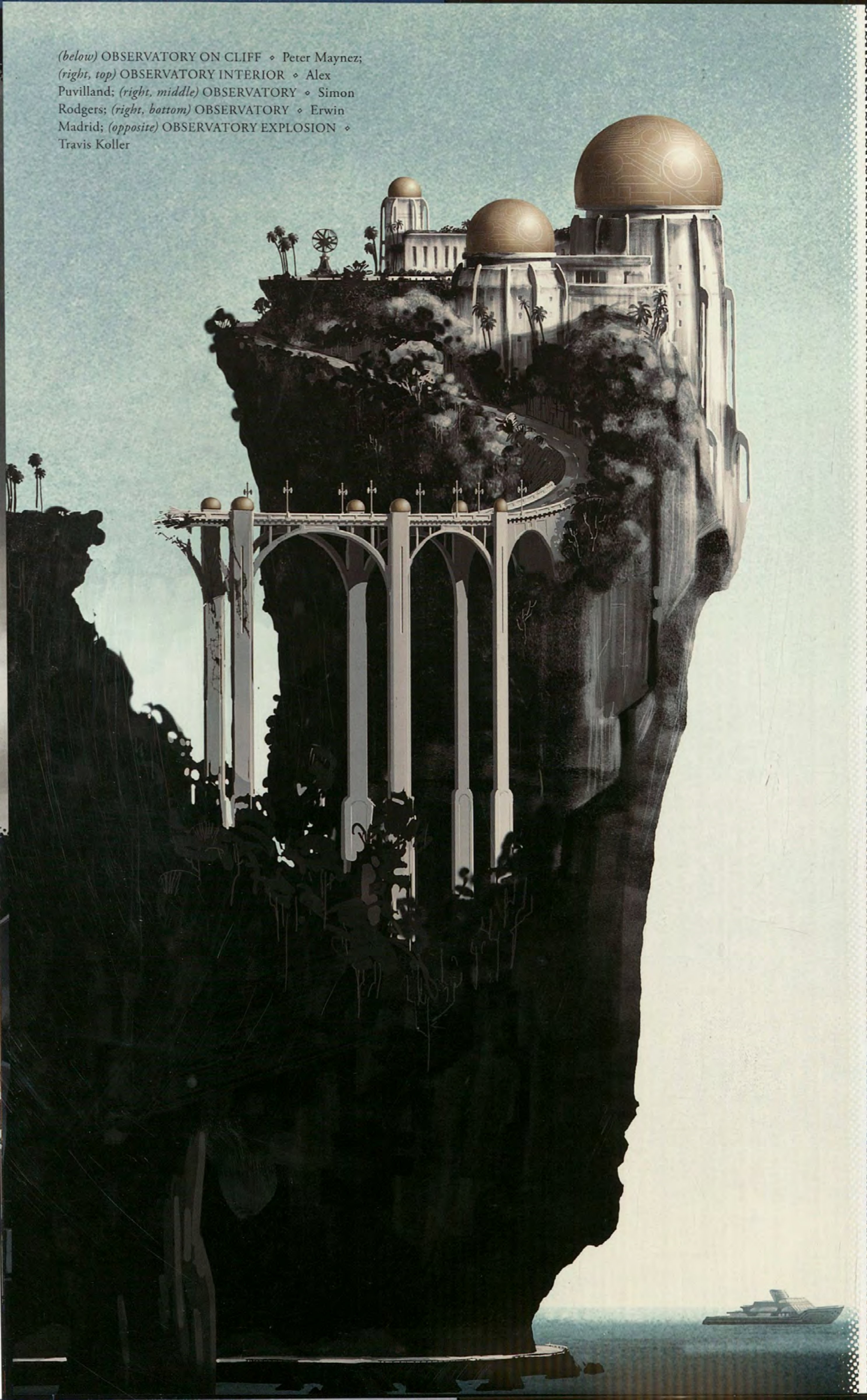
THE OBSERVATORY

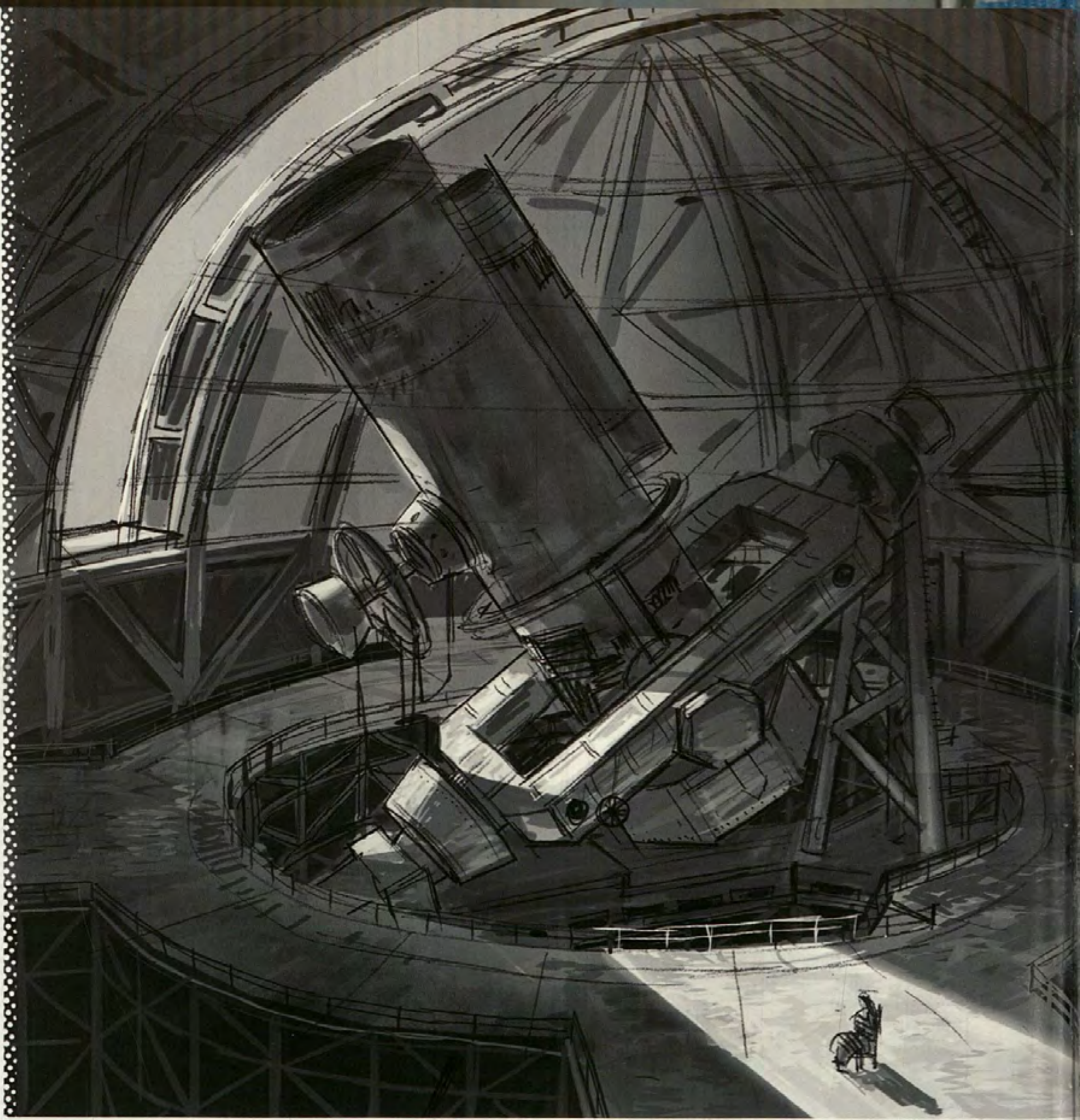
The symbolic power lingering in an abandoned power plant makes it a sweet hideout for a supervillain. Likewise, an observatory is just as iconic. It just reeks of surveillance, technology, and aliens: important aspects of any supervillain's workday.

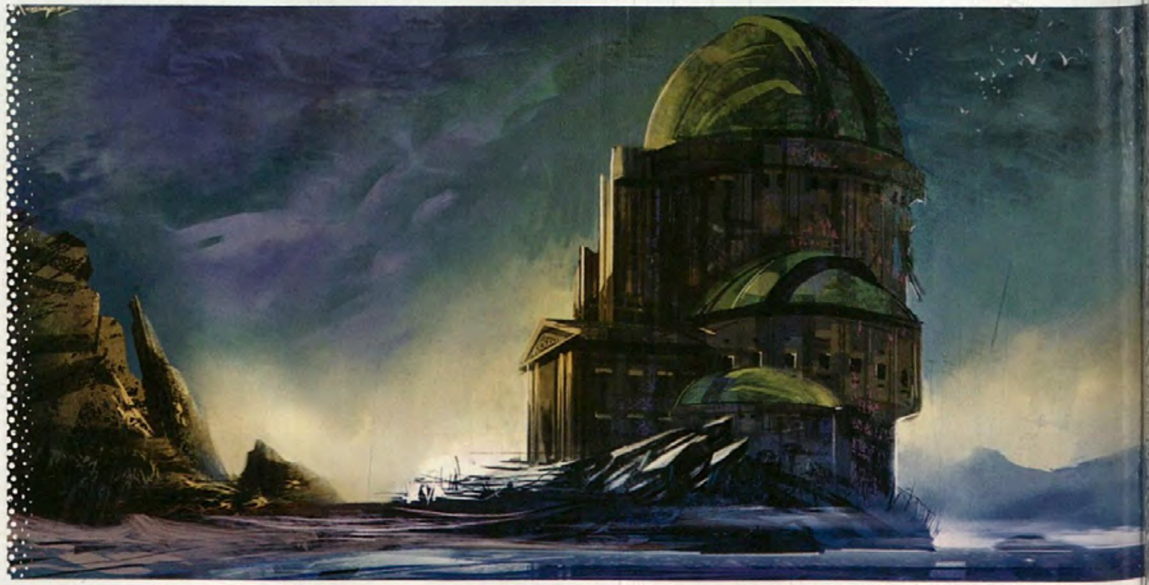
Most flamboyantly imaginary of all the early development concepts is visual development artist Peter Maynez's view of the Observatory: It stands abandoned on a promontory, connected to Metro City by a bridge broken by an earthquake or a mudslide. Production designer David James mentions that the bridge here is based on J.A.L. Waddell's Colorado Street Bridge, built in Pasadena in 1913; it's commonly known in Los Angeles as "Suicide Bridge."

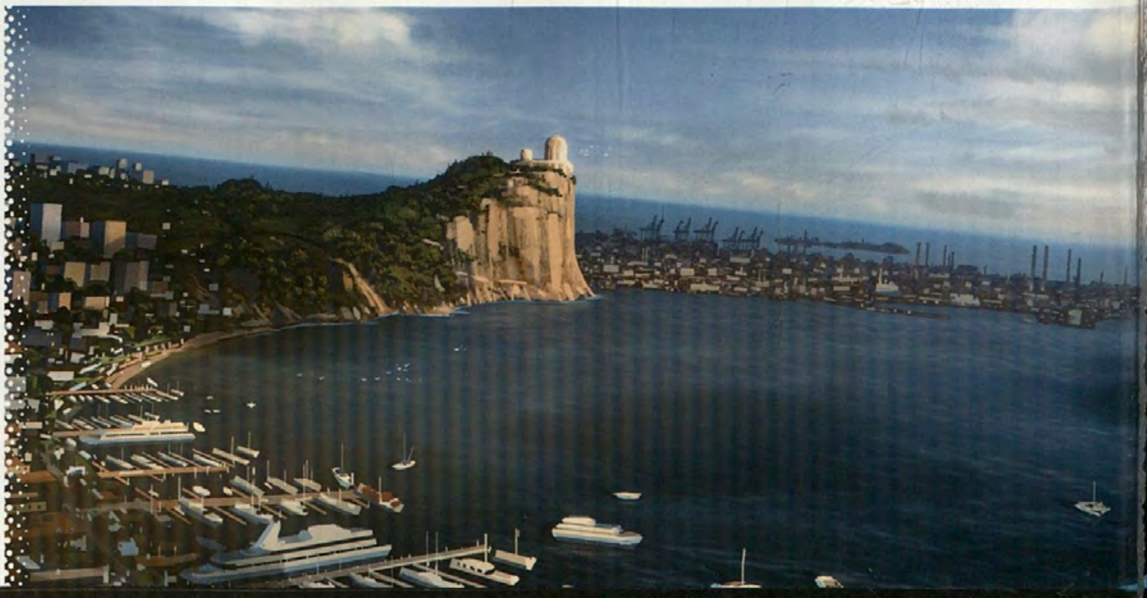
LA's 1935 Griffith Observatory, given some extra height, has clearly served as the model for Metro City's Observatory throughout the design process. The final version of the sky-watching facility adds to the drama by placing it atop a cliff that resembles Yosemite National Park's Half Dome.

(opposite, top) OBSERVATORY ◆ Alex Puvilland; *(opposite, bottom left)* OBSERVATORY INTERIOR ◆ Alex Puvilland; *(opposite, bottom right)* OBSERVATORY EXPLOSION ◆ Kory Heinzen; *(above)* METRO MAN IS DEAD ◆ Ruben Perez

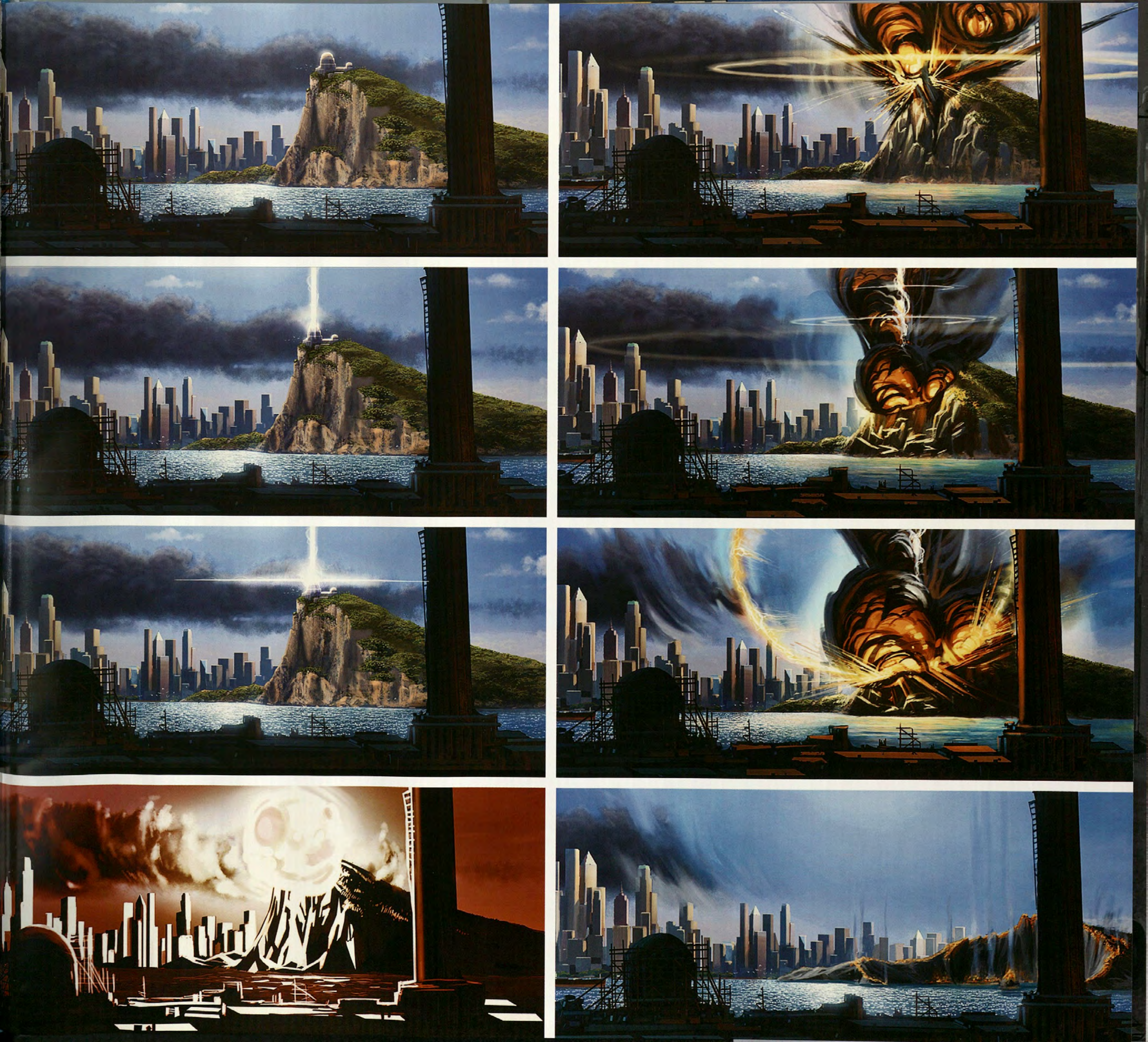


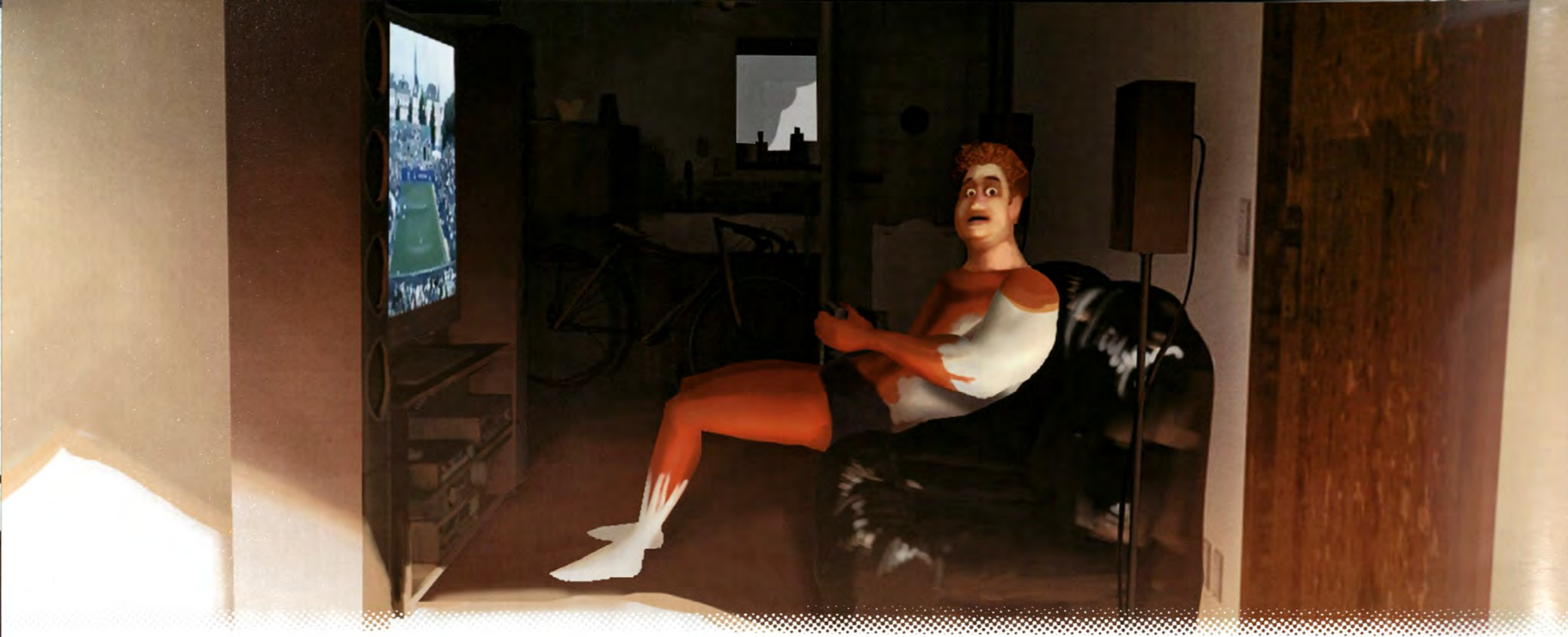


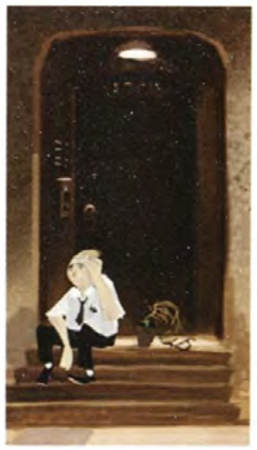




(below) OBSERVATORY ON CLIFF ⋄ Peter Maynez; *(right, top)* OBSERVATORY INTERIOR ⋄ Alex Puvilland; *(right, middle)* OBSERVATORY ⋄ Simon Rodgers; *(right, bottom)* OBSERVATORY ⋄ Erwin Madrid; *(opposite)* OBSERVATORY EXPLOSION ⋄ Travis Koller







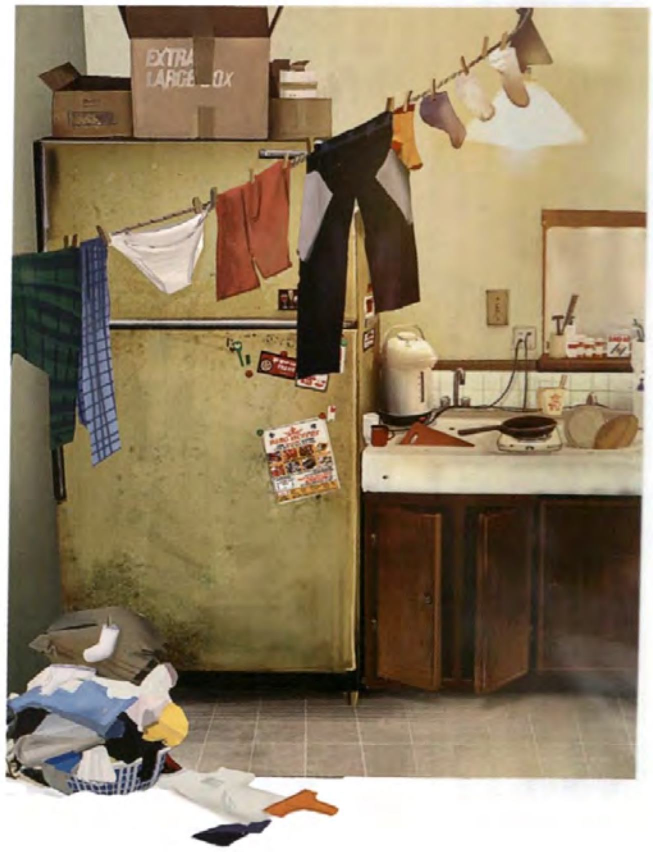
HAL'S APARTMENT & NEIGHBORHOOD

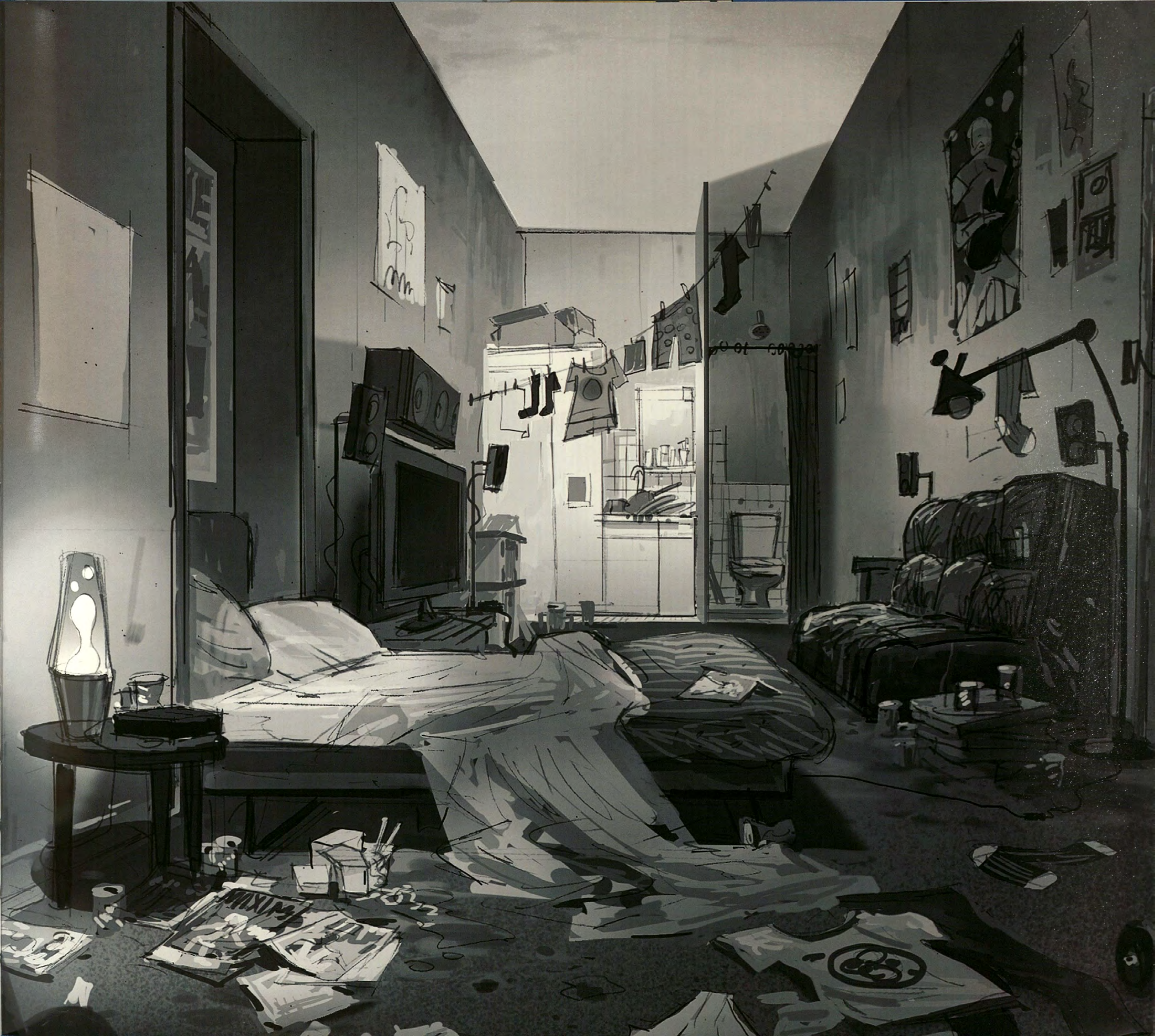
Some urban planner with a grudge took a neighborhood full of 1920s brick apartments, slammed down some sixty-foot-high concrete columns in the midst of it, and ran eight lanes of traffic right over the top.

Different artists approached the challenge of depicting the outermost, dingiest part of town by drawing on references to different decrepit urban locations. Visual development artist Dominique Louis's piece, "Hal's Neighborhood," sees the area as something like Queens, with plenty of garbage cans and a series of Z-shaped fire escapes scrawled up the sides of buildings. Visual development artist Goro Fujita gave the neighborhood the density and gridded windows of the less expensive parts of Tokyo, with slapped-up snarls of electric wires and a foreign-style tramway-crossing sign. The little extra space and blue sky in visual development artist Erwin Madrid's view suggests California urban—likely Oakland. Visual development artist Alex Puvilland's view seems more like LA's no-go zones.

The interior of Hal's apartment sums up Hal in an instant: the Murphy bed, a reliable comedic prop since the silent comedy era, never folds into its wall space—until the instant of Hal's transformation. Its burden of unwashed sheets and clothing matches the dishes filling up the sink and the discarded coffee cups and pizza boxes that litter the floor.

(above) HAL PLAYING VIDEO GAMES ◇ Erwin Madrid; *(left)* HAL ON FRONT STEPS ◇ Kory Heinzen; *(below & opposite)* HAL'S APARTMENT ◇ Alex Puvilland

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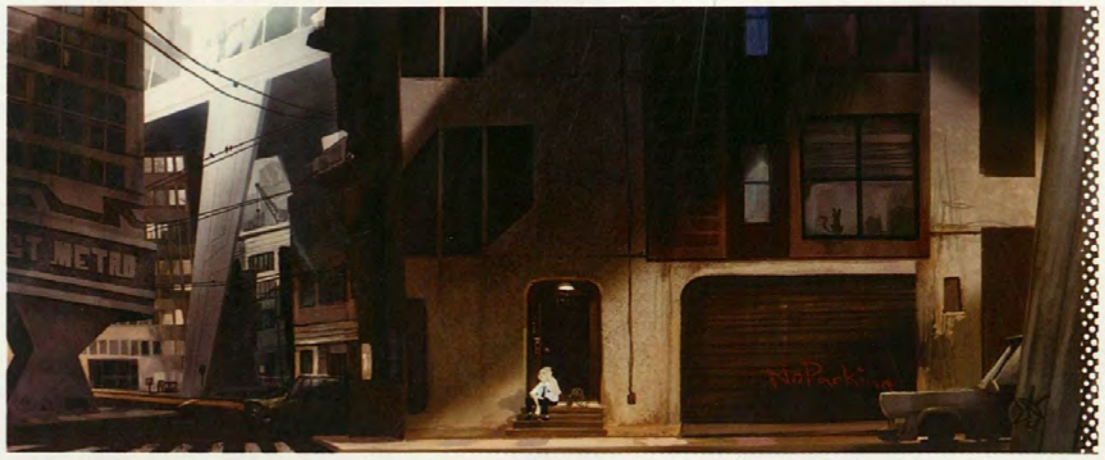
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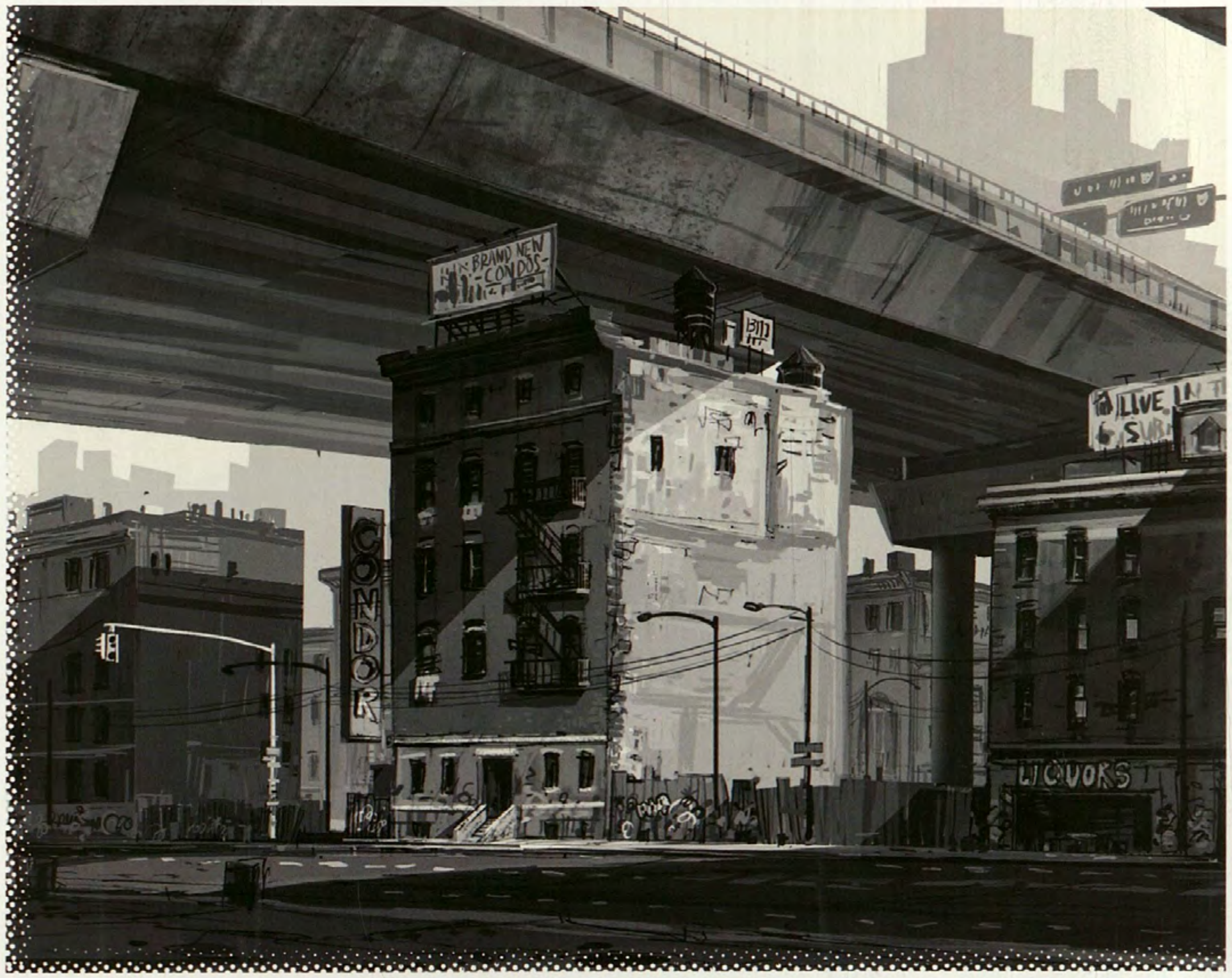
No Parking

(above) HAL ON FRONT STEPS ◆ Kory Heinzen; *(right)* HAL'S NEIGHBORHOOD SKETCH ◆ Alex Puvilland; *(below)* HAL'S NEIGHBORHOOD ◆ Kory Heinzen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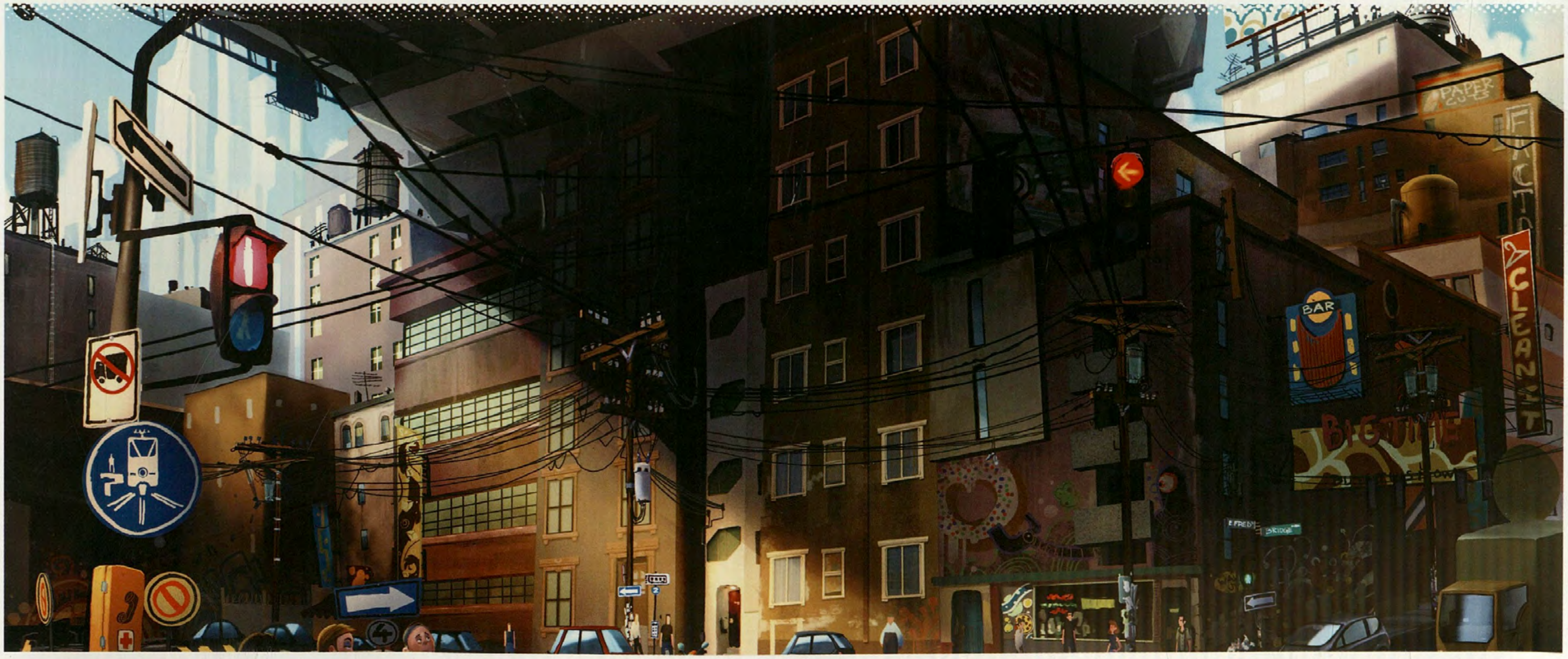
> "Hal's neighborhood is in the outer edge of the city, in the dingiest part of town. When he takes over Metro City, he's looking for the respect he's never had."
> —DENISE CASCINO, PRODUCER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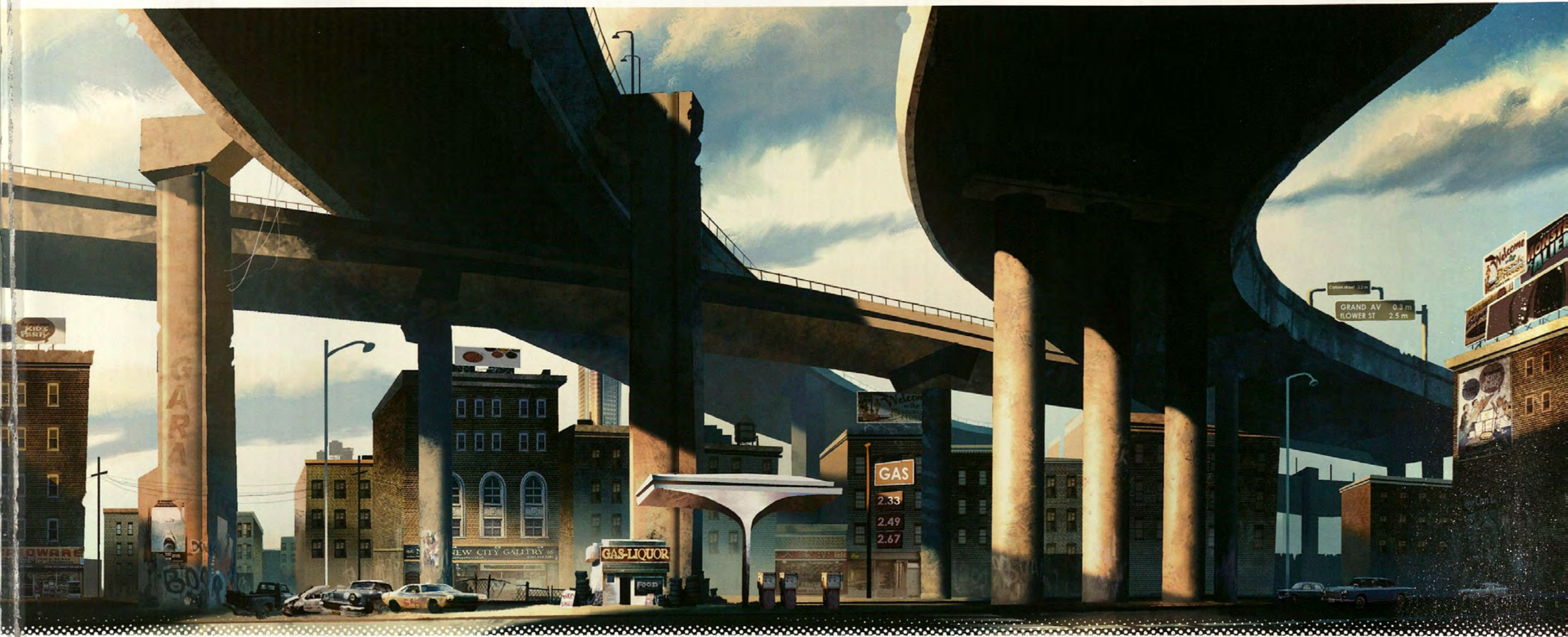
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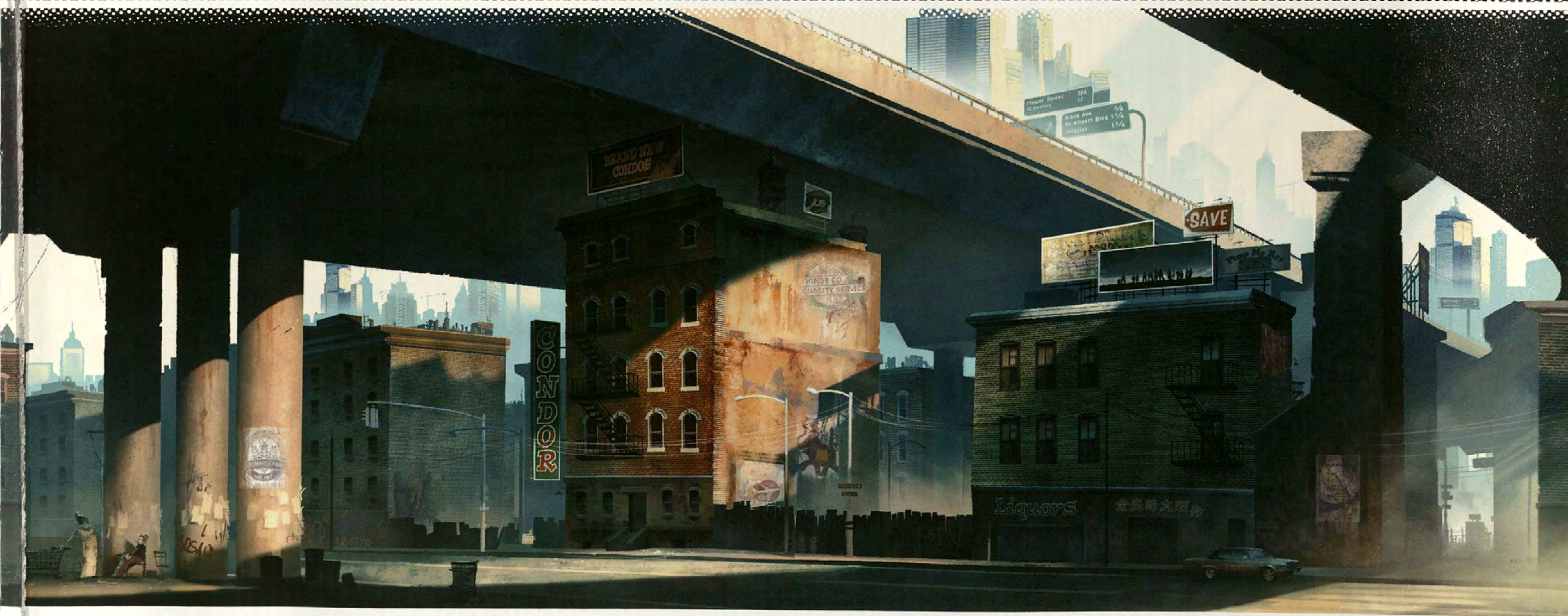
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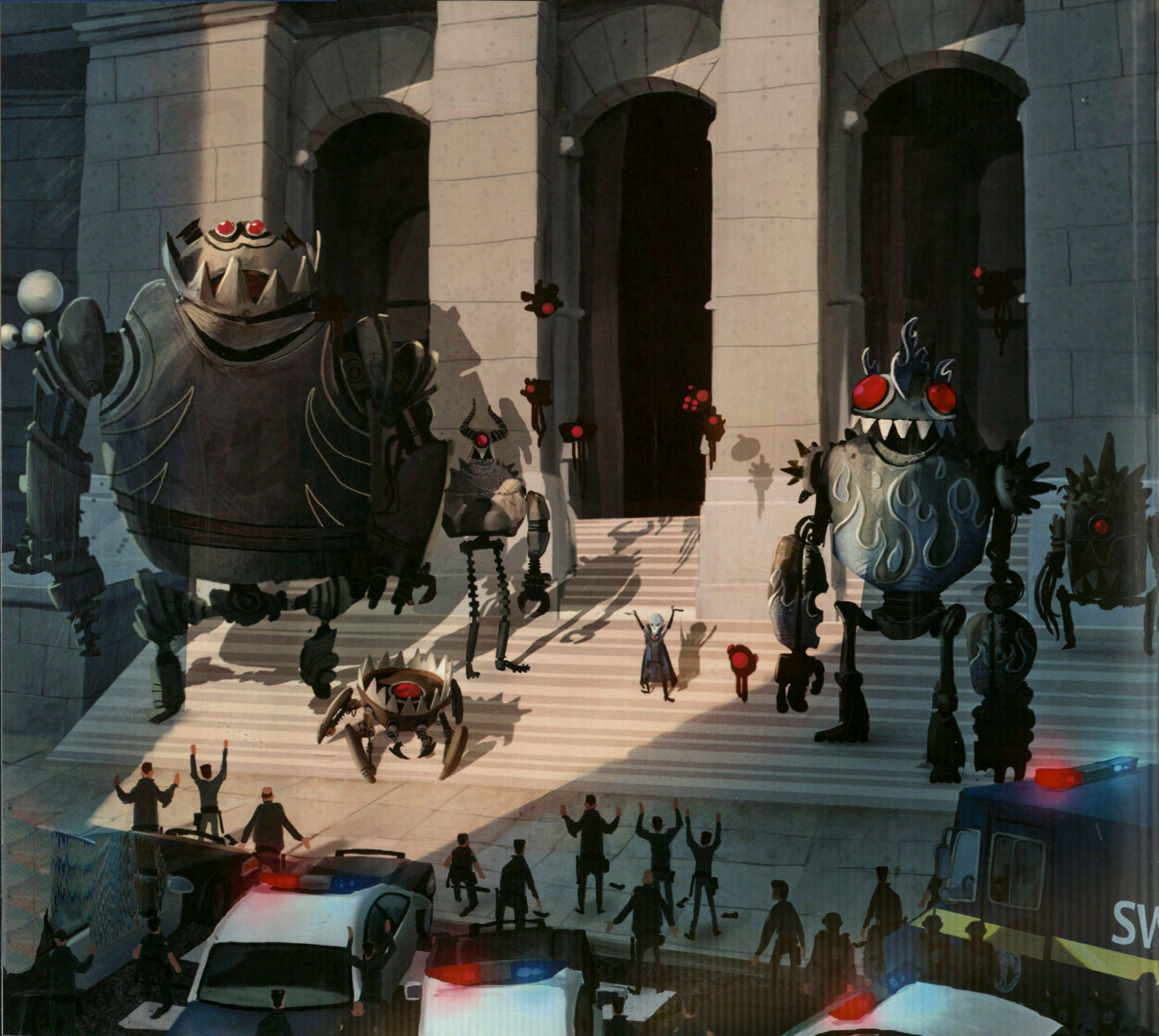
QUALITY SERVICE
SAVE
Liquors

(top) HAL'S NEIGHBORHOOD REVERSE ⋄ Painting by Dominique Louis, layout by Alex Puvilland; *(above)* HAL'S NEIGHBORHOOD ⋄ Painting by Dominique Louis, layout by Alex Puvilland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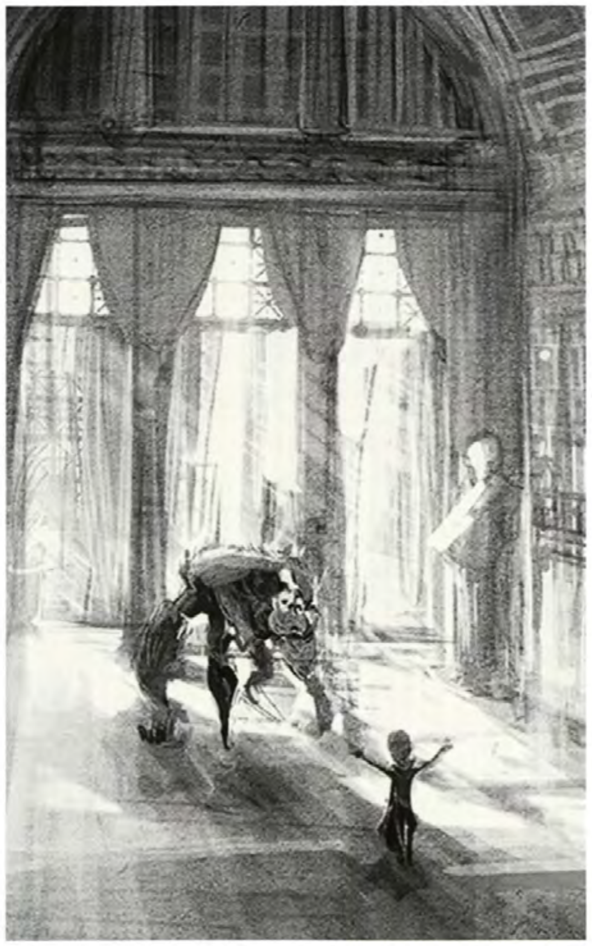
CITY HALL

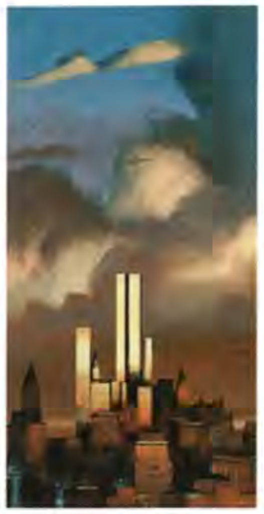
Conceiving of Metro City's City Hall, production designer David James says, "I was going with what I know—but we put a few more tiers on the cake." James, who resides in northern California, referenced San Francisco's City Hall, a robust symbol of the city's recovery after the 1906 earthquake and fire. Its 1915 Beaux Arts dome is a foot higher than the U.S. Capitol building; in *Megamind*, the building is blown up even larger. Its vast windows and the abundant sunlight they let in are a startling sight to a subterranean type like Megamind. Once he takes over, he paints the dome blue and crams it full of his ill-gotten gains.

The theatrical size of Metro City's City Hall is all part of its superhero lore. This is a city accustomed to excess, through the epochal battles of its greatest hero and its worst villains. As city development supervisor Jonathan Gibbs says, "There's lots of damage being done, but nobody feels in danger. The sum is balanced. You've got your good guy and your bad guy, and they cancel each other out. They give you a show. Metro Man and Megamind both enjoy it; the place is like a stage: there's city plaza and City Hall as backdrops, and the stage is right in the middle."

"I've never had a view before."
—MEGAMIND, IN POSSESSION
OF METRO CITY'S CITY HALL



(opposite) CITY HALL WITH ROBOT GUARDS ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(top)* MEGAMIND BEHIND DESK ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(above)* MEGAMIND IN CITY HALL ◦ Chin Ko



THE MAKING OF METRO CITY

"We're pretty good with forests," says city development supervisor Jonathan Gibbs. In fairy-tale-set animations, such as the *Shrek* series, DreamWorks Animation's animators can program animation to create trees randomly one by one until a hillside is forested, replete with the levels of detail one finds in the natural world.

For *Megamind*, Gibbs and his visual effects team wanted to create the same level of detail for Metro City, making the city feel lived in and alive. "We took our cameras up into San Francisco and walked around, and the level of detail in the world we saw was so astonishingly high," Gibbs recalls. "We don't quite get there—there are so many little things we don't do. Our job is to pick the right stuff, because we can't build everything."

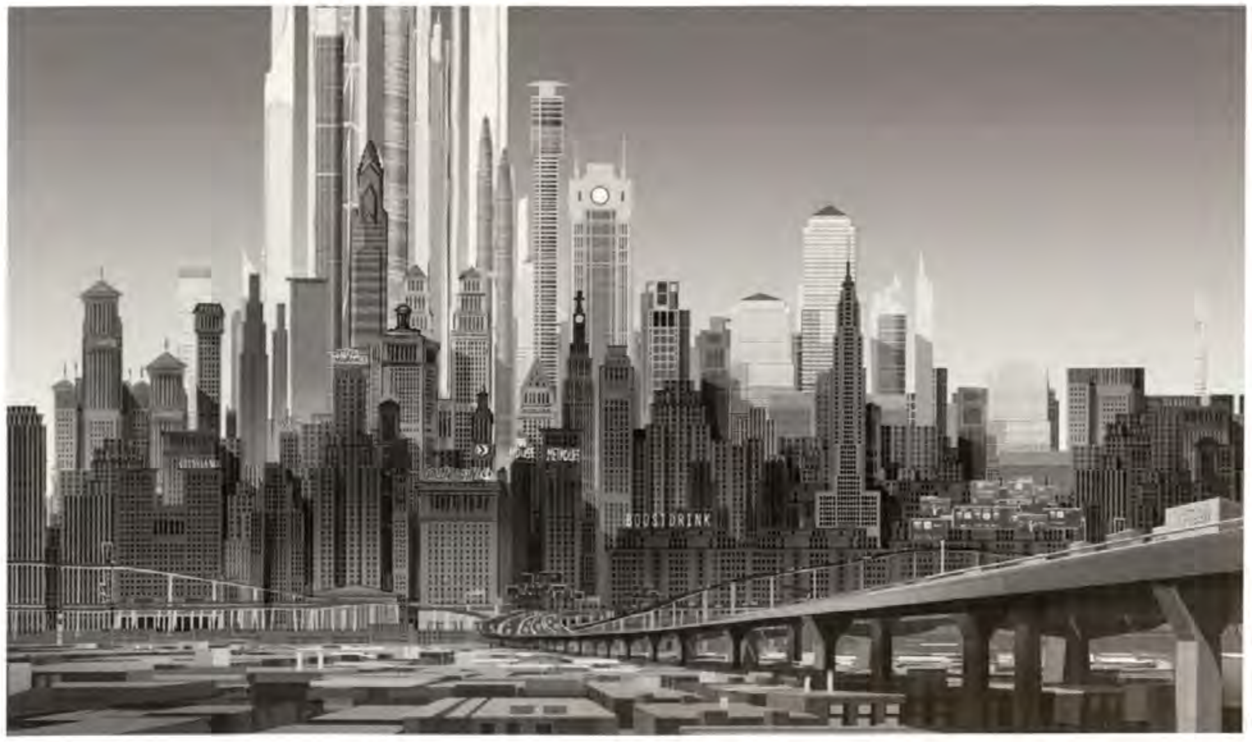
Metro City, in contrast to previous DreamWorks Animation urban centers, needed this attention to detail because it is such a main feature in the film, frequently referred to by the filmmakers as a type of character in its own right. "We've never had to do a big city," observes Gibbs. "*Bee Movie* [2007] took place in New York around Central Park, and *Monsters vs. Aliens* [2009] was set in San Francisco. But both films were more constrained in what they showed. When we saw the designs for *Megamind*, we knew we had to go all over Metro City. Superheroes flying over a city cover lots of ground. We needed to be able to go right down next to some buildings, and then pop up and fly to the top of the tallest buildings and look at the vistas. That was a daunting challenge for us."

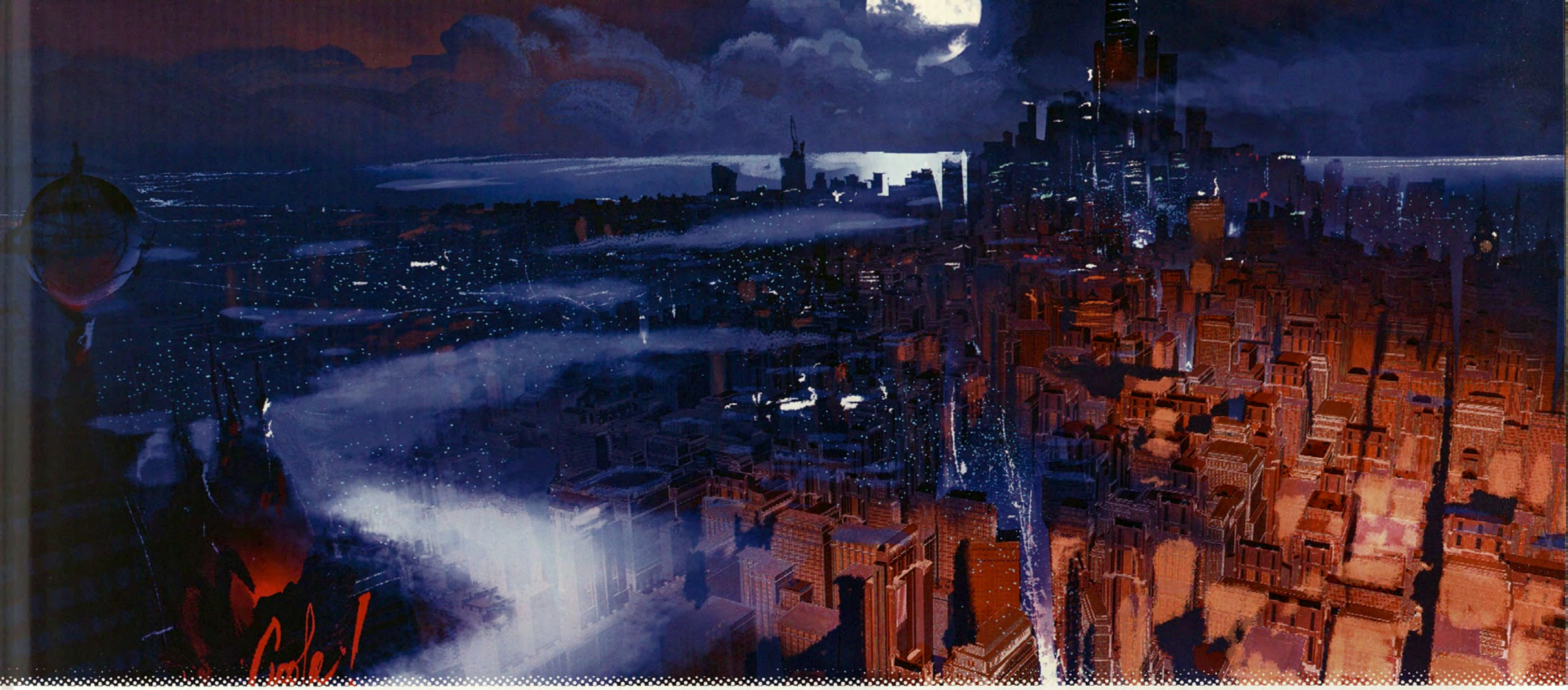
To create a cityscape this nuanced, the layout team turned to what they knew: forests. Production designer David James describes the systems used, in overview: "The geniuses here modified a software engine used for generating trees and bushes. How it works is like so: you have a certain sets of parameters, and you give them values. They're mostly pine trees and a few bushes—*whirr*, and they're done. If you get a tree out of place, no one notices. If you get a street or a building or a stop sign facing the wrong way, though, it's not going to work."

Obviously, the tools used to build forests weren't going to fulfill the production's city planning needs, and new programs had to be developed specifically for *Megamind*. Gibbs says one, titled City Builder, "allowed us to put up buildings of different shapes and sizes. We could actually paint onto the ground in different zones to indicate different kinds of buildings and then fuzz the boundaries a bit to make them look a little more real. We could add main roads by hand and secondary roads automatically: five or six different kinds of streets, from expressways to narrow alleys."

With these levels of detail and variety, creating an animated action sequence in the city was now a lot easier. Head of FX David Lipton says, "We did a lot of work up front upgrading our demolition tools and pipeline, so if we want a giant robot walking down the street smashing buildings, we can do it in a lot of shots. We can get a first-pass building smash with just a couple of hours of work, whereas it used to take two or three days."

(left) NEW METRO CITY BUILDING LINEUP ◦ Dominique Louis; *(below)* METRO CITY ◦ Alex Puvilland; *(opposite, top)* METRO CITY SKYLINE ◦ Dominique Louis; *(opposite, bottom)* METRO CITY ◦ Dominique Louis

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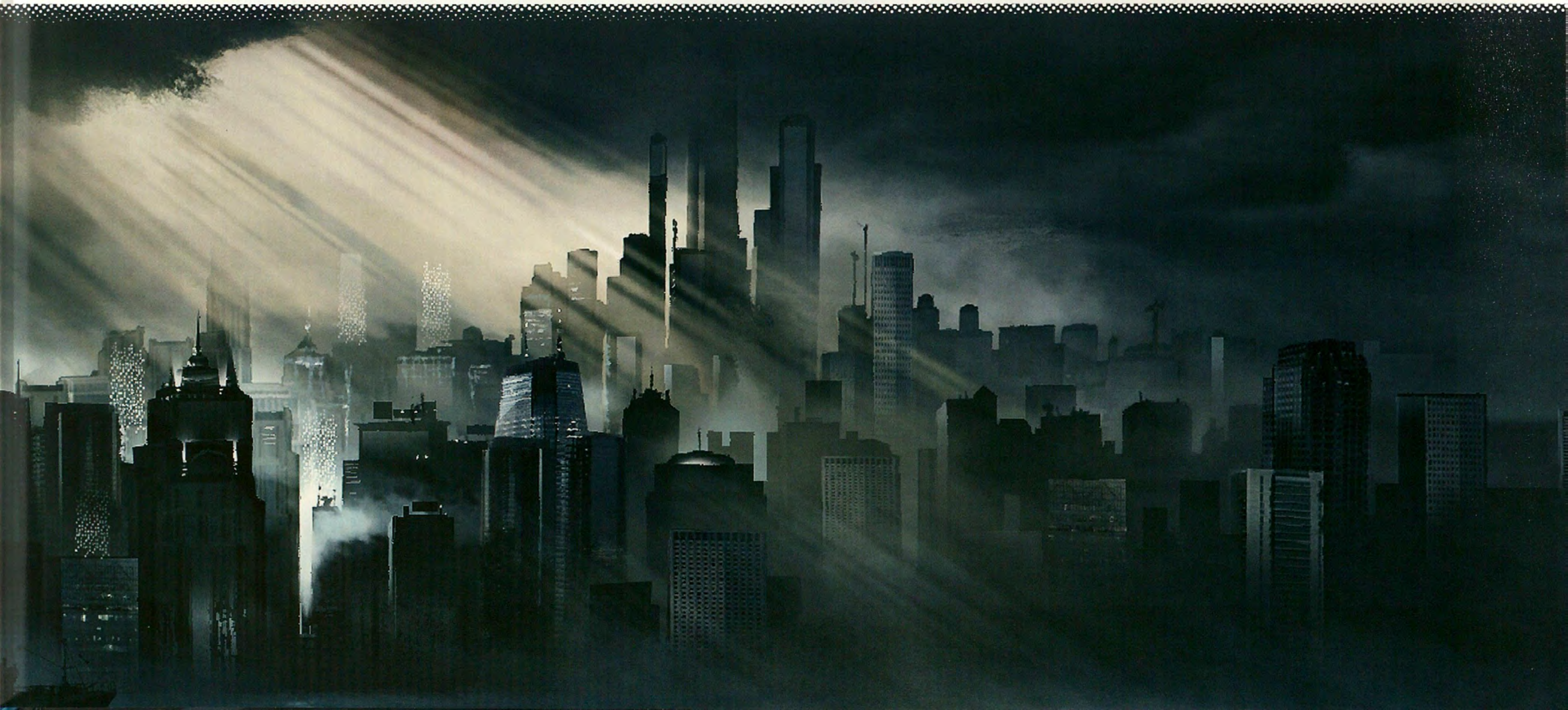
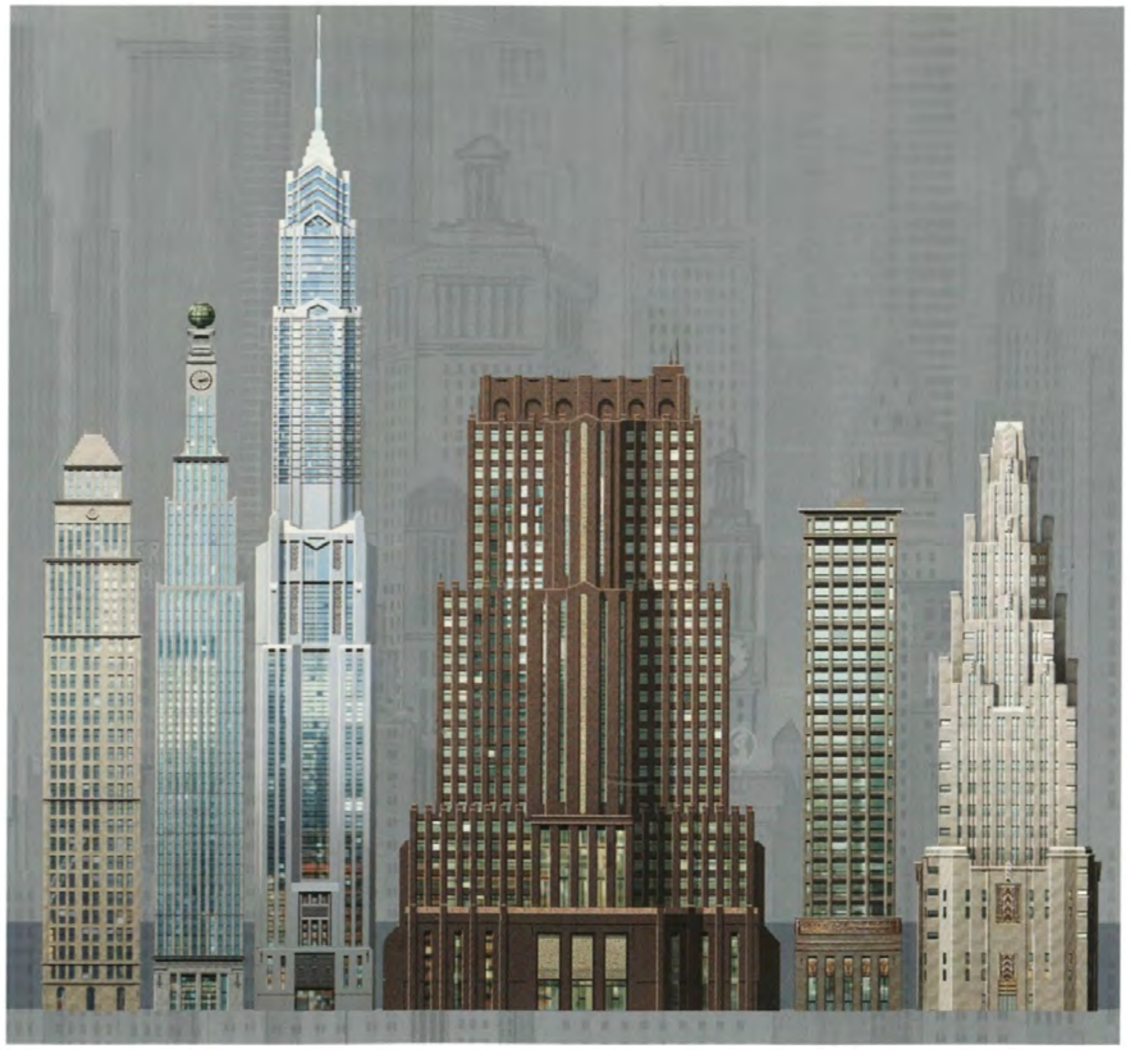
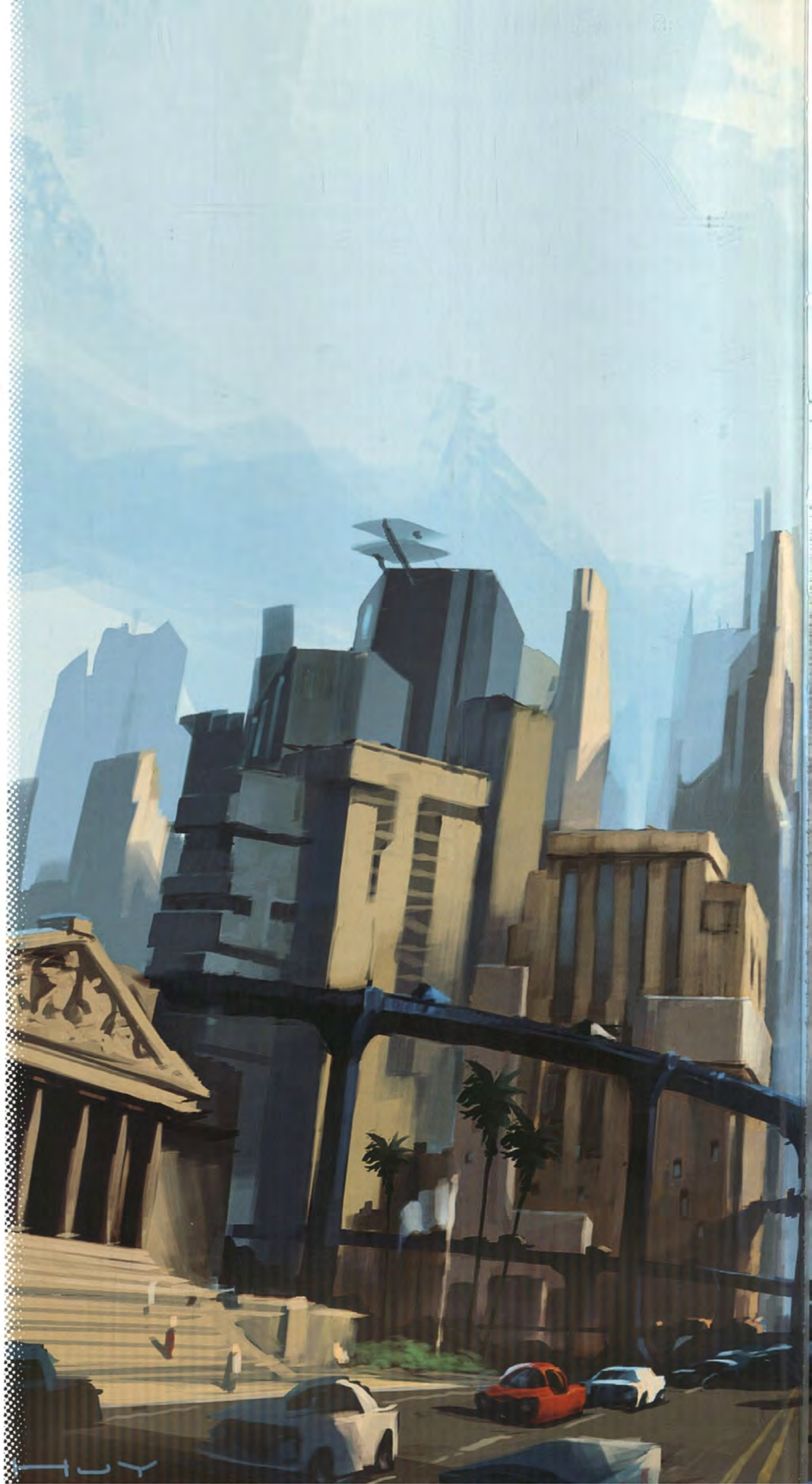


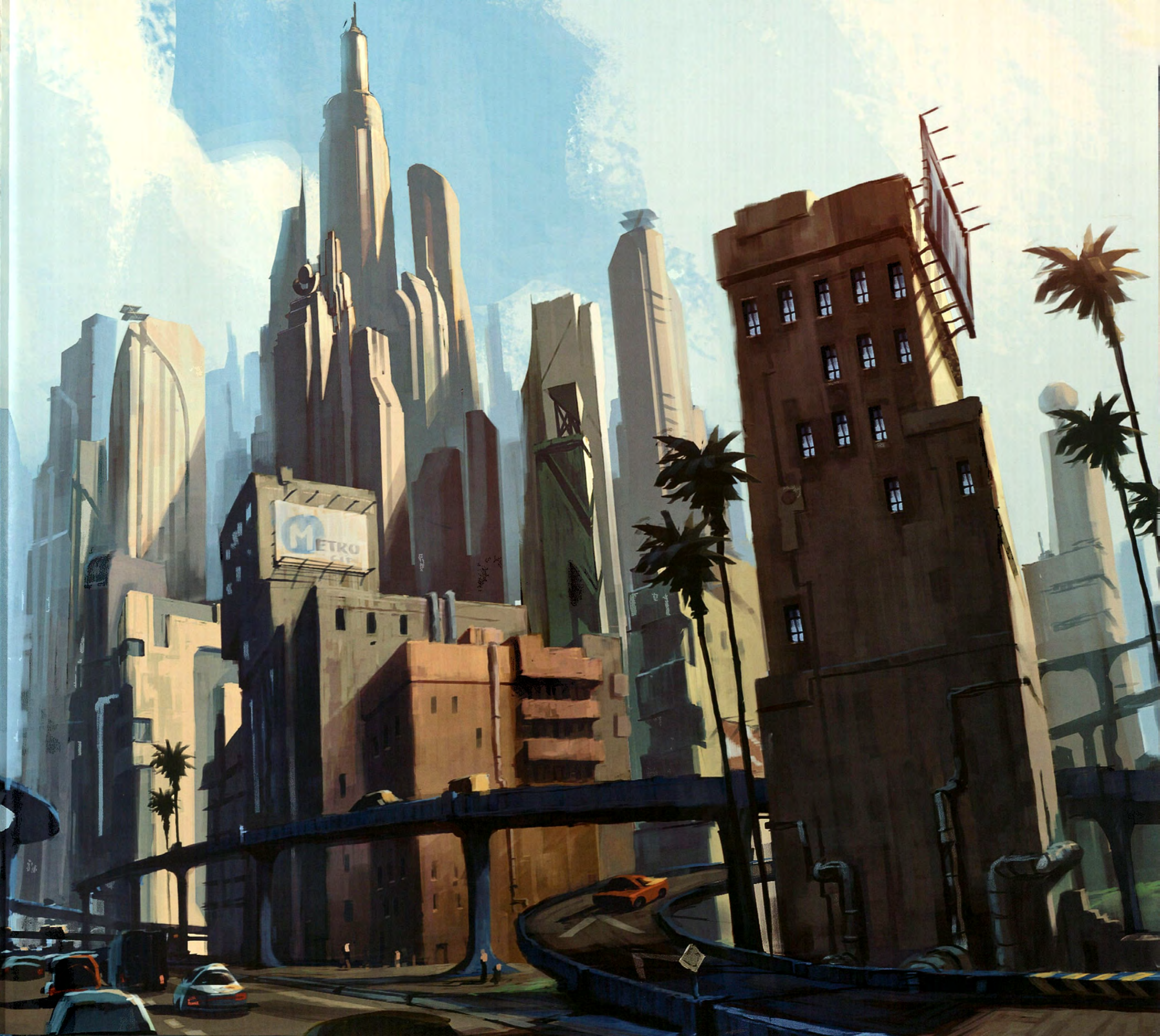
The other software program used to plan Metro City was a building generator called Edi—short for *edifice.* Before *Megamind* was done, it would create some 70,000 buildings with which audiences will come into close contact. At about five blocks away from the viewer, details start to fade, yet the buildings of Metro City are still fairly tangible. "We needed a system we could use to generate buildings that could be art directed, so that each one could be unique," Gibbs says. "And that's what the Edi system does. It's a system with architectural rules to follow: it can do variations on buildings, or construct a three-story or five-story building with all the right window types.

"If you're trying to shoot a street scene, the software can open a gap so you can see to downtown," he adds. "It can take a few buildings and make it so you can strip them down and make them smaller. They won't just scale down: they'll lose floors but retain their original tops and bottoms. And if the building gets bigger for some reason, the lobby automatically becomes more fancy. Metro City is not a place I've ever been, but it's a cool place I'd like to visit."



(above) BUILDING LINEUP ◆ Travis Koller;
(right) METRO CITY STREET LEVEL ◆ Huy Nguyen

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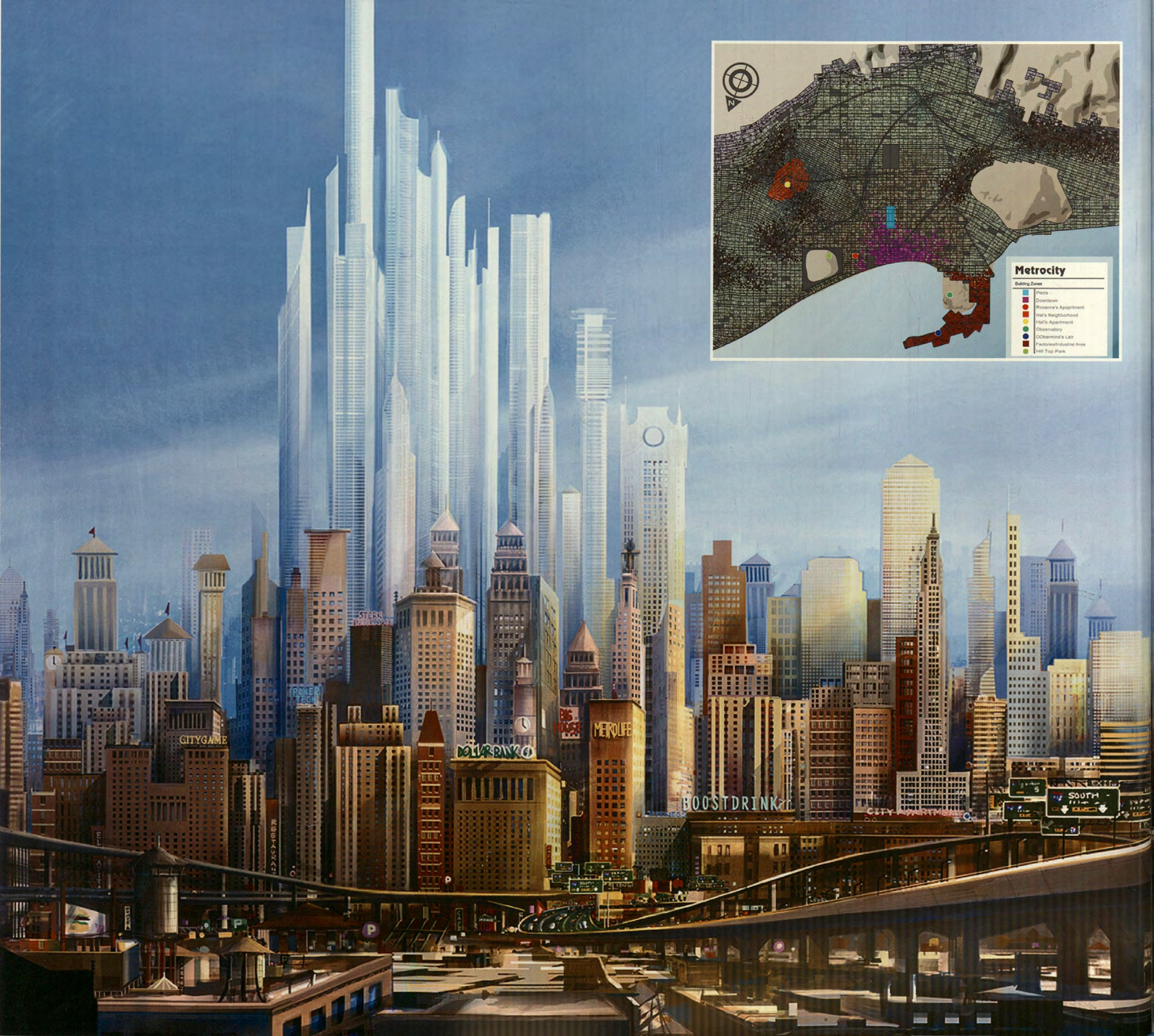

Metrocity
Building Zones
Plaza
Downtown
Roxanne's Apaprtment
Hal's Neighborhood
Hal's Apartment
Observatory
OObermind's Lair
Factories/Industrial Area
Hill Top Park
STERN
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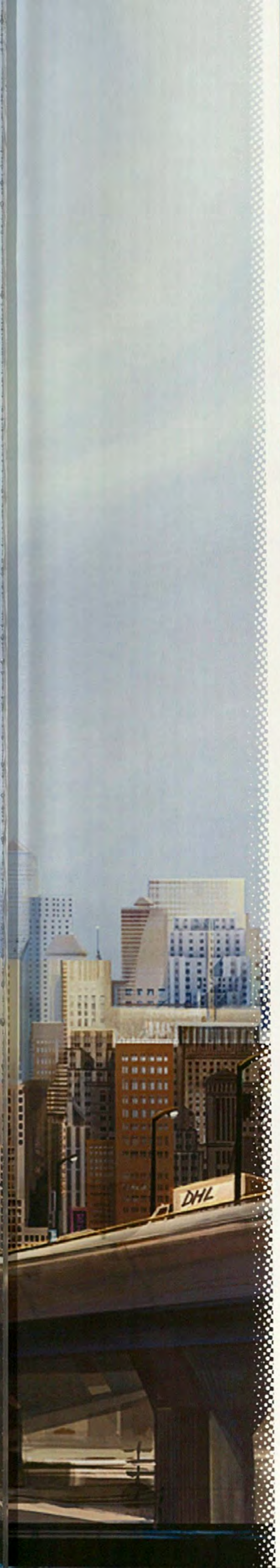
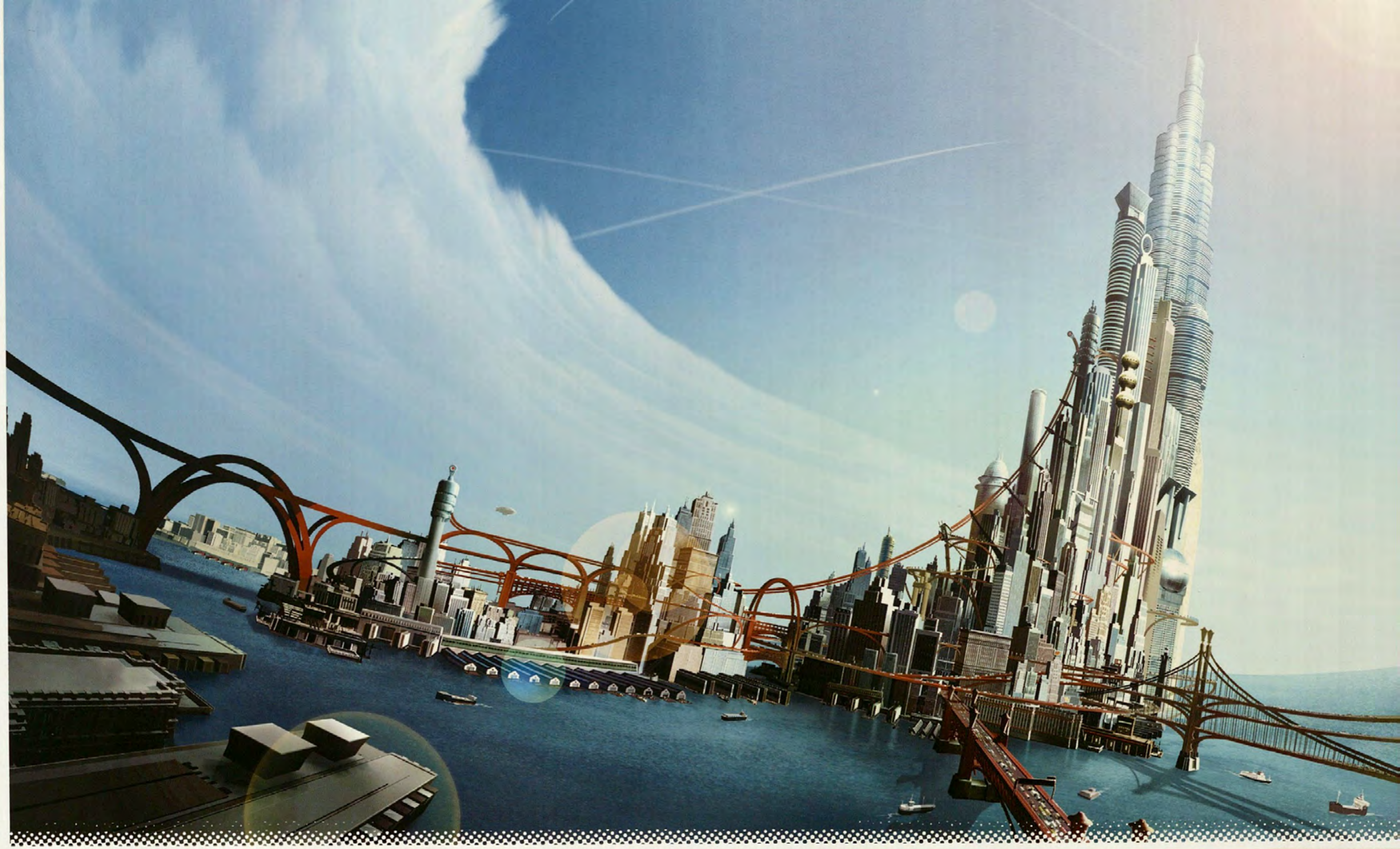
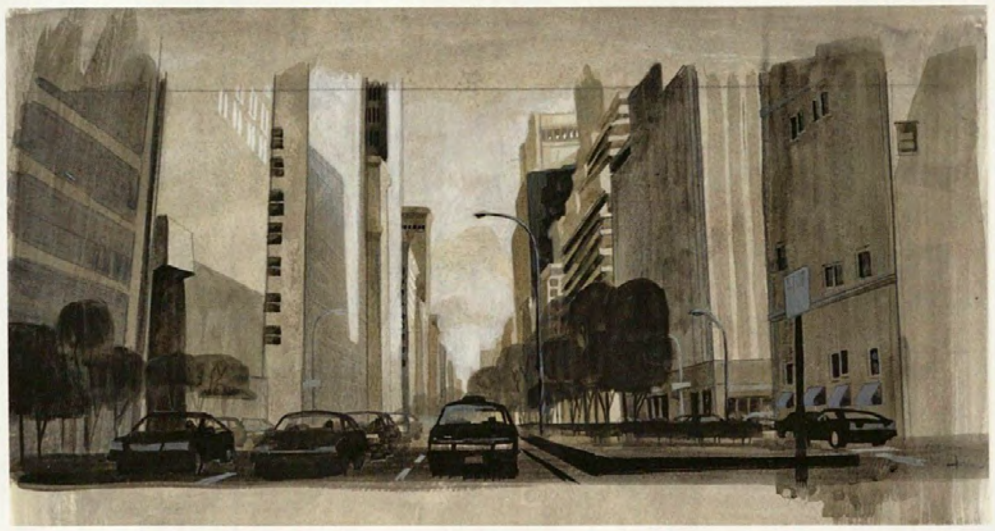
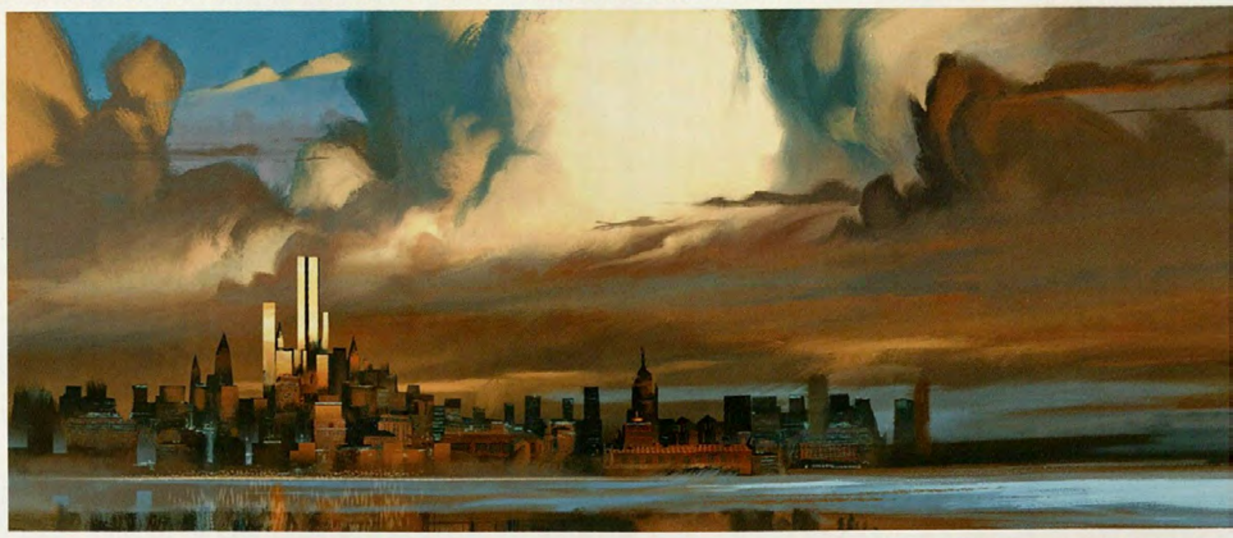
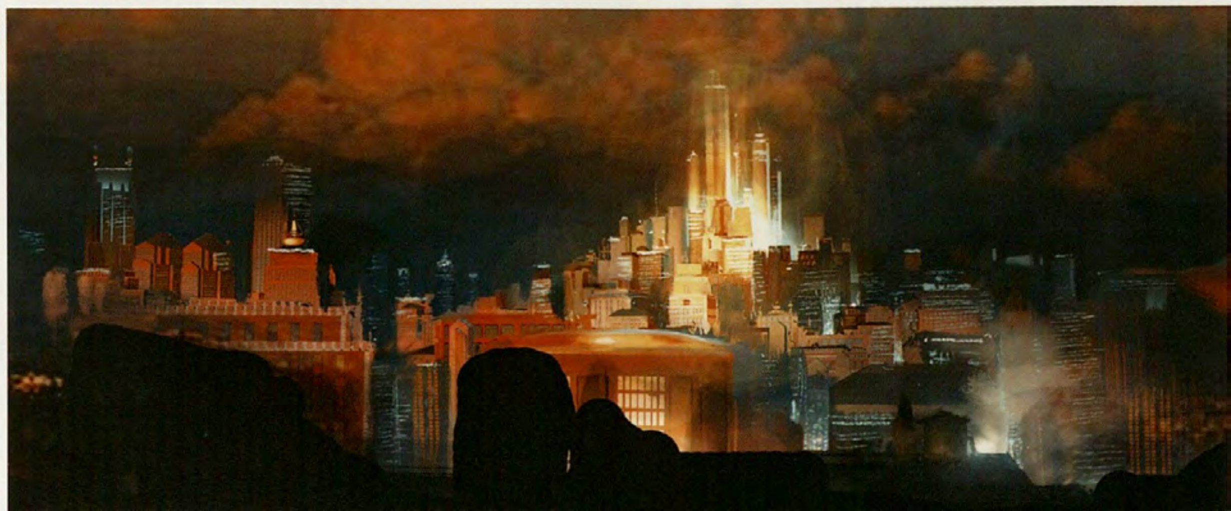
CITYGAME
DOLLAR BANK
METROLIFE
BOOSTDRINK
CITY APARTMENTS
SOUTH
5
RESTAURANT



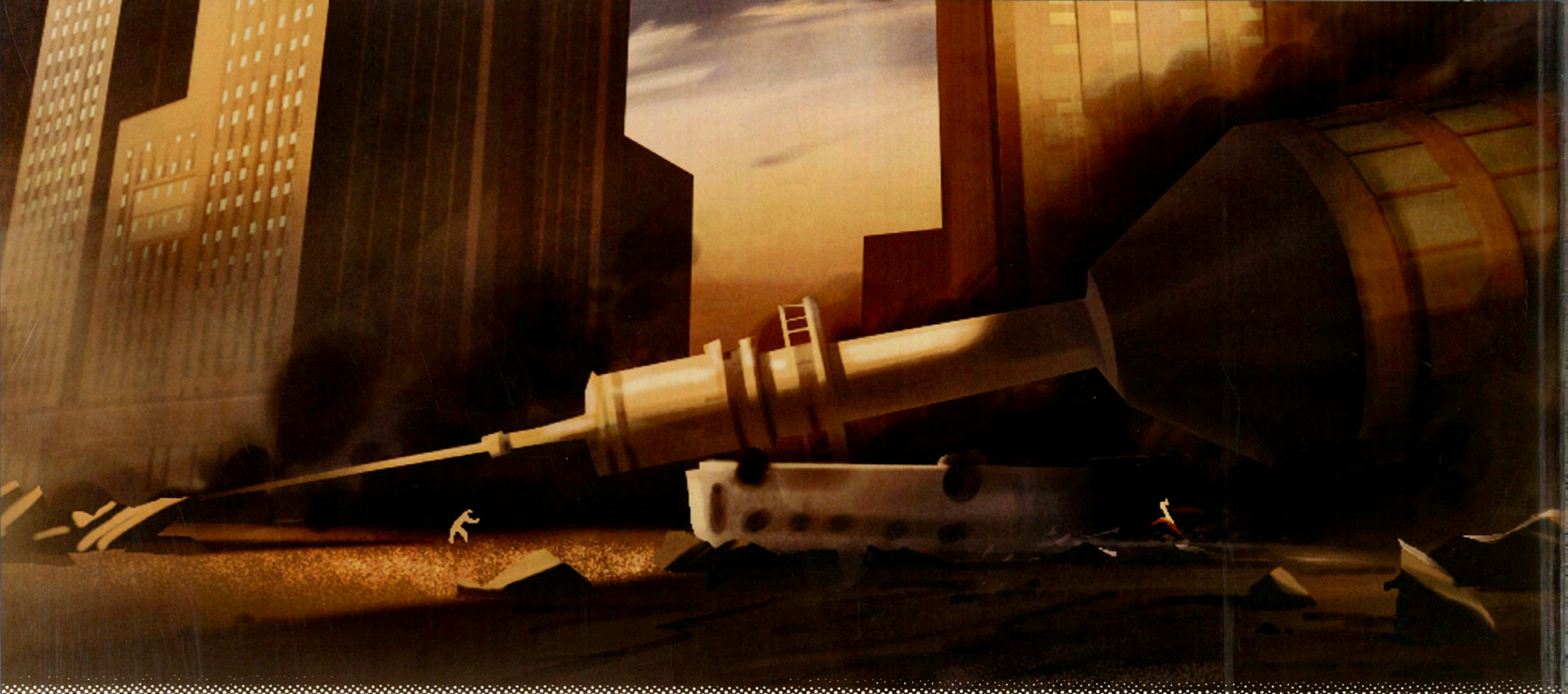


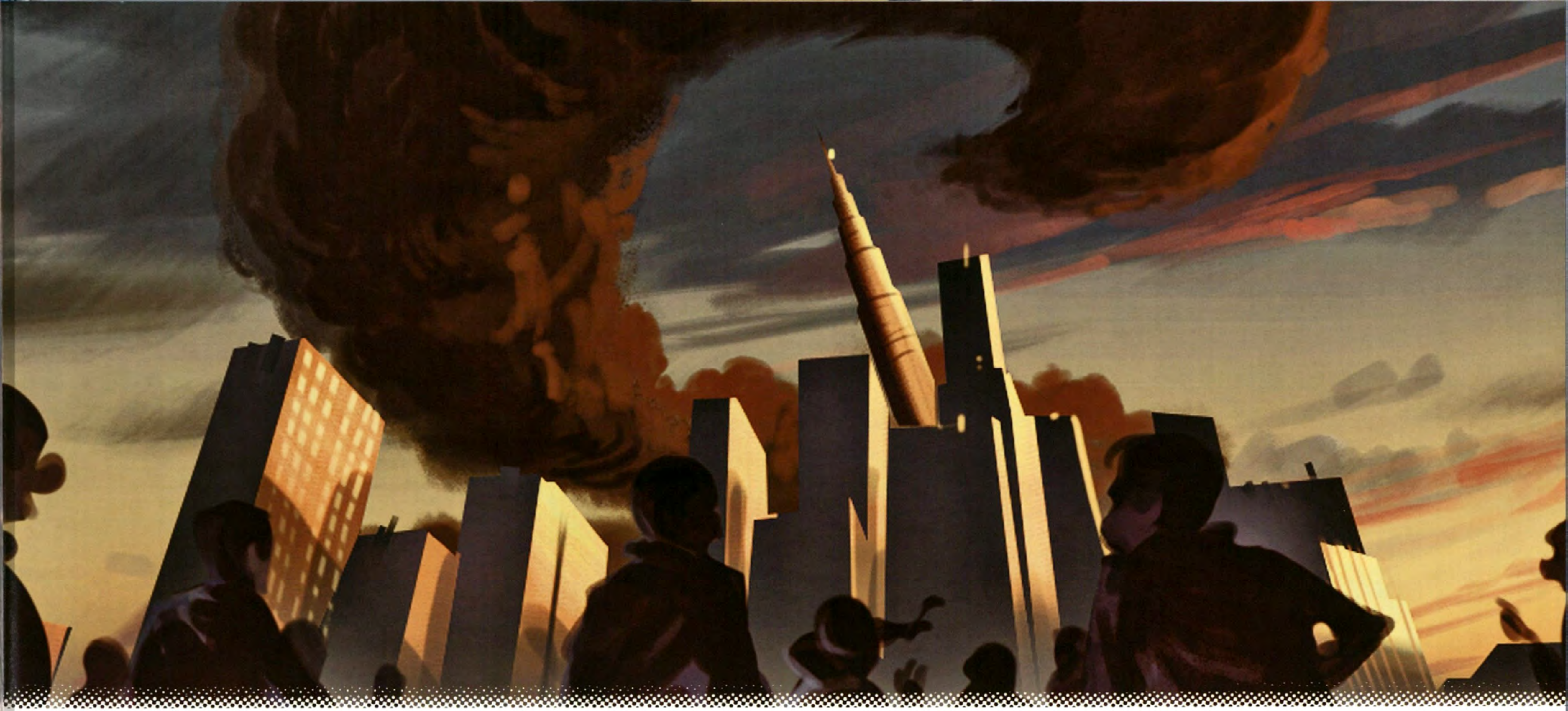






(left) METRO CITY ∘ Chin Ko; *(opposite, inset)* METRO CITY MAP ∘ Kory Heinzen; *(top)* METRO CITY ∘ Pierre Olivier Vincent; *(above)* CITY STREETS ∘ Kendal Cronkhite; *(right)* BIG STORM & NEW FOCUS SKYLINE ∘ Dominique Louis



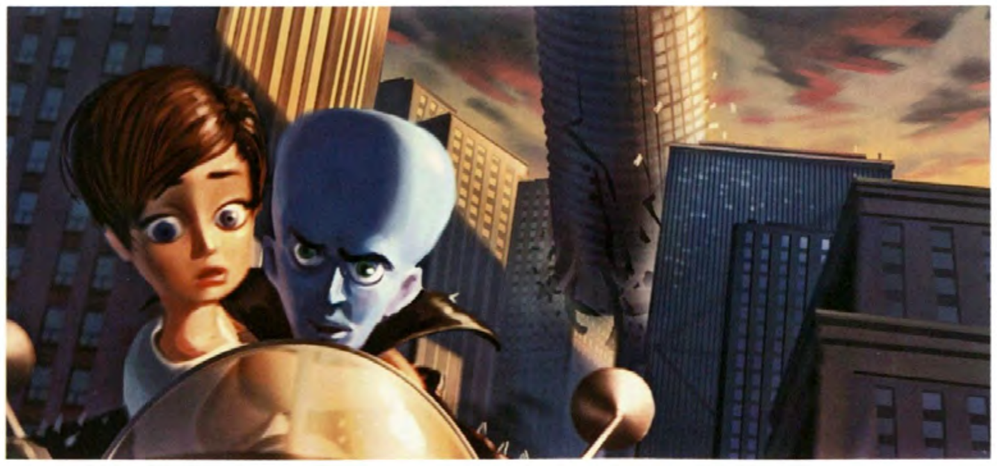


METRO CITY DESTROYED

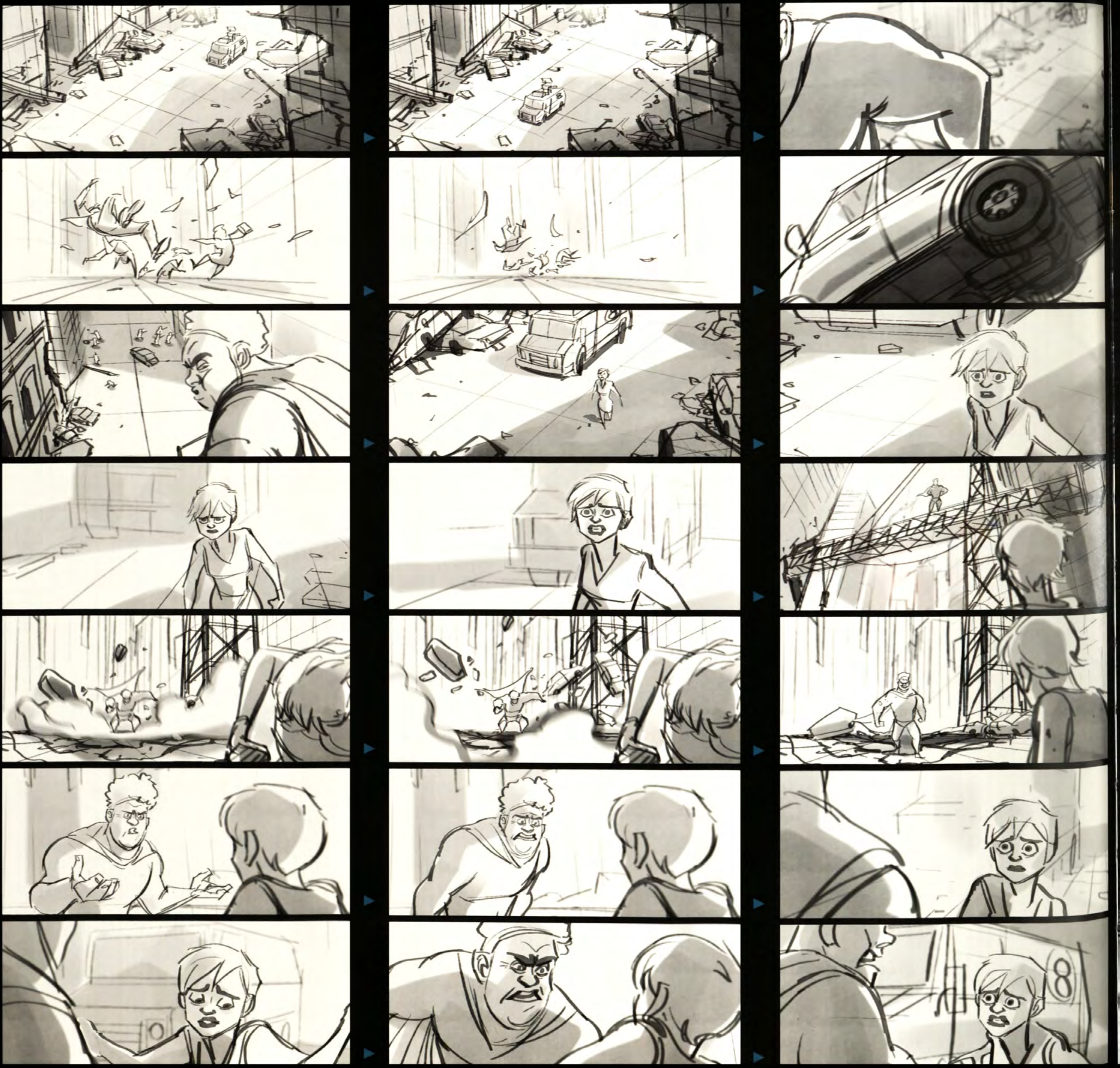
Clearly, the cleaning deposit on Metro City isn't going to be returned after the climactic battle between heroes, villains, and former villains at the end of *Megamind*. Skyscrapers, city buses, gasoline tankers, and even ordinary lamp posts (used like sabers in a fencing duel) are the weapons of choice in this carnival of chaos. Head of FX David Lipton comments, "There's tons of action here. Early in development, we realized we should focus on demolition and explosions, and we came up with something really cool."

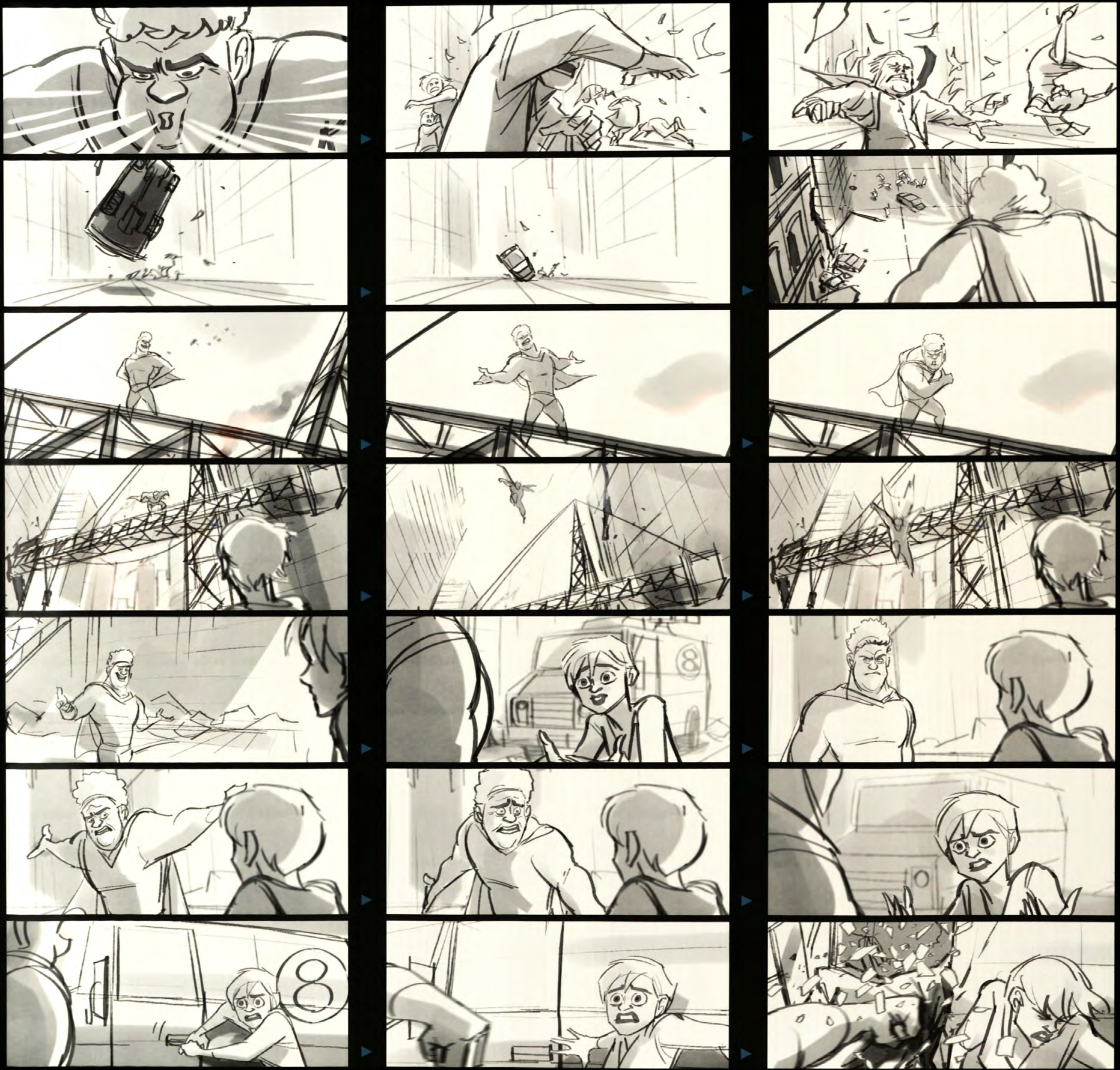
Lipton says he was "really in his element" doing the crashing cars and breaking glass in this ultimate battle. "*Monsters vs. Aliens* was huge in volume and it was great to get to build on that using what we learned. It's a huge sequence, and what FX animators dream of!"

(opposite, top) METRO MAN STANDOFF ◦ Ruben Perez; *(opposite, bottom)* METRO MAN IS BACK ◦ Ruben Perez; *(above)* SMOKE CLOUD ◦ Ruben Perez; *(below)* MEGAMIND & ROXANNE ESCAPING ◦ Ruben Perez; *(following pages)* METRO CITY DESTROYED STORYBOARDS ◦ Catherine Rader



METRO CITY DESTROYED

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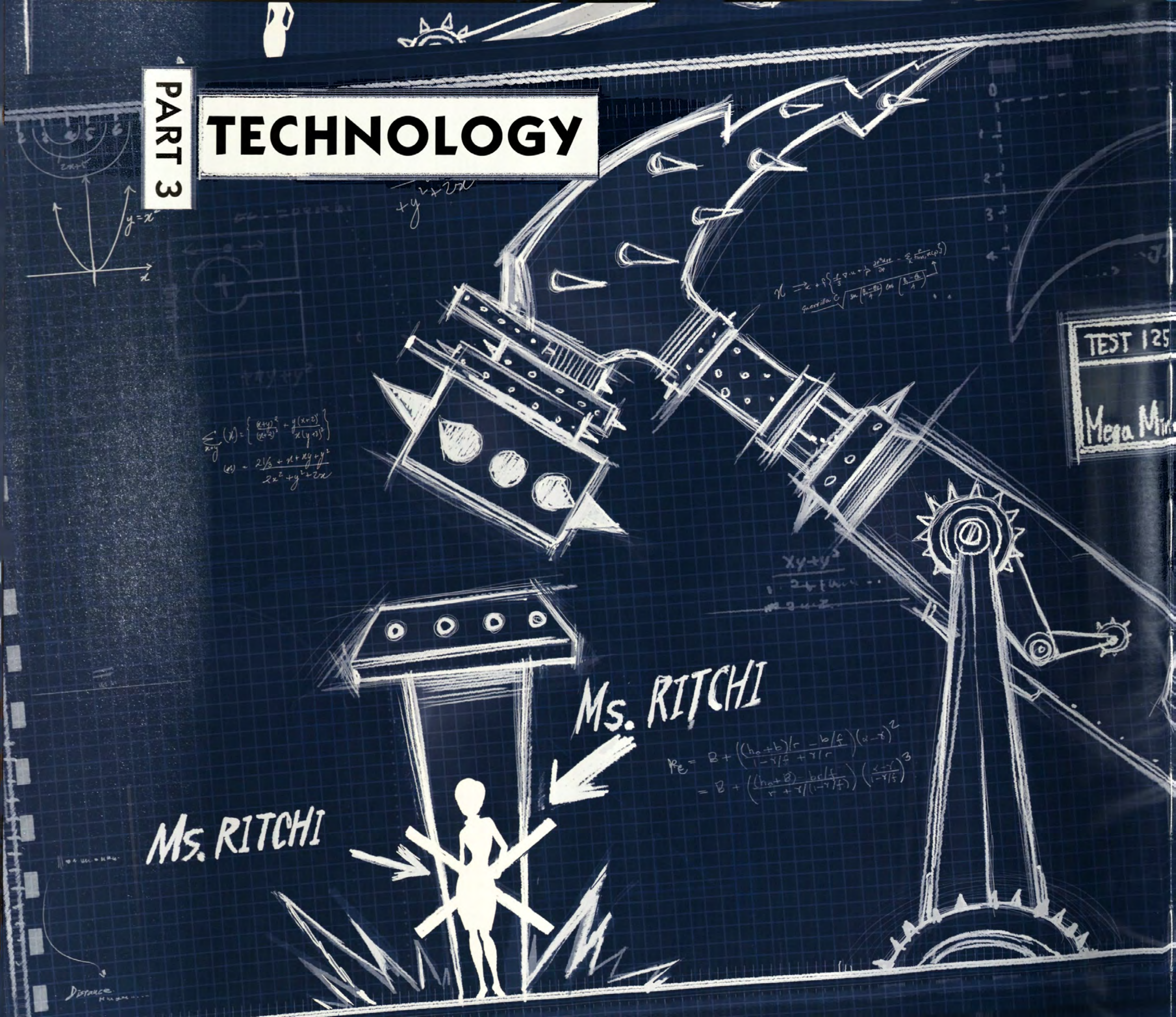
PART 3

TECHNOLOGY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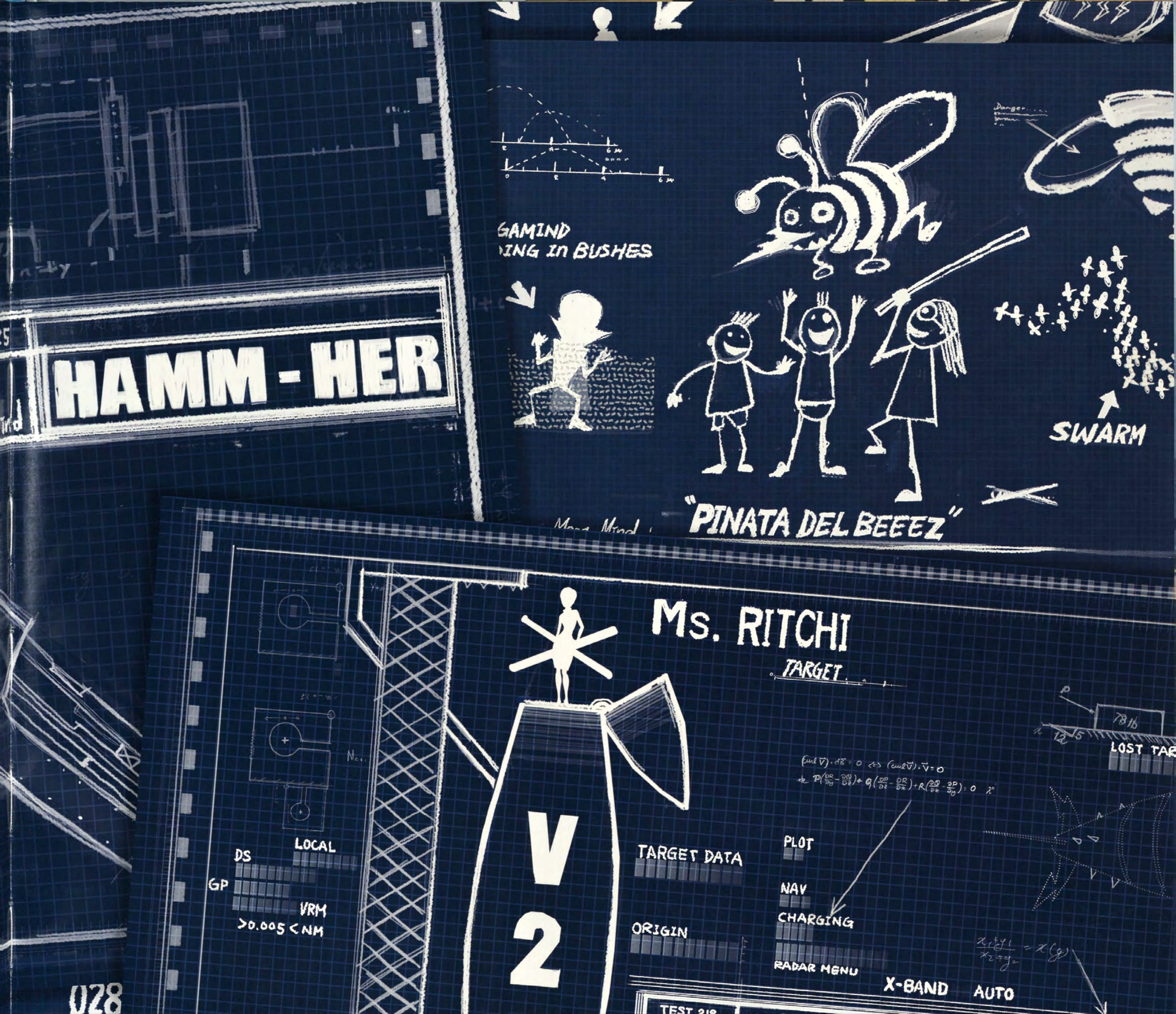
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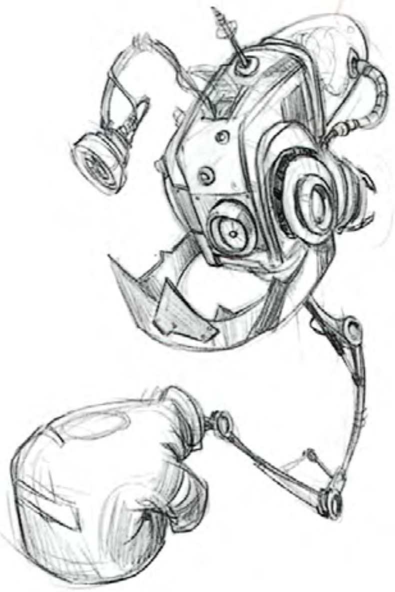


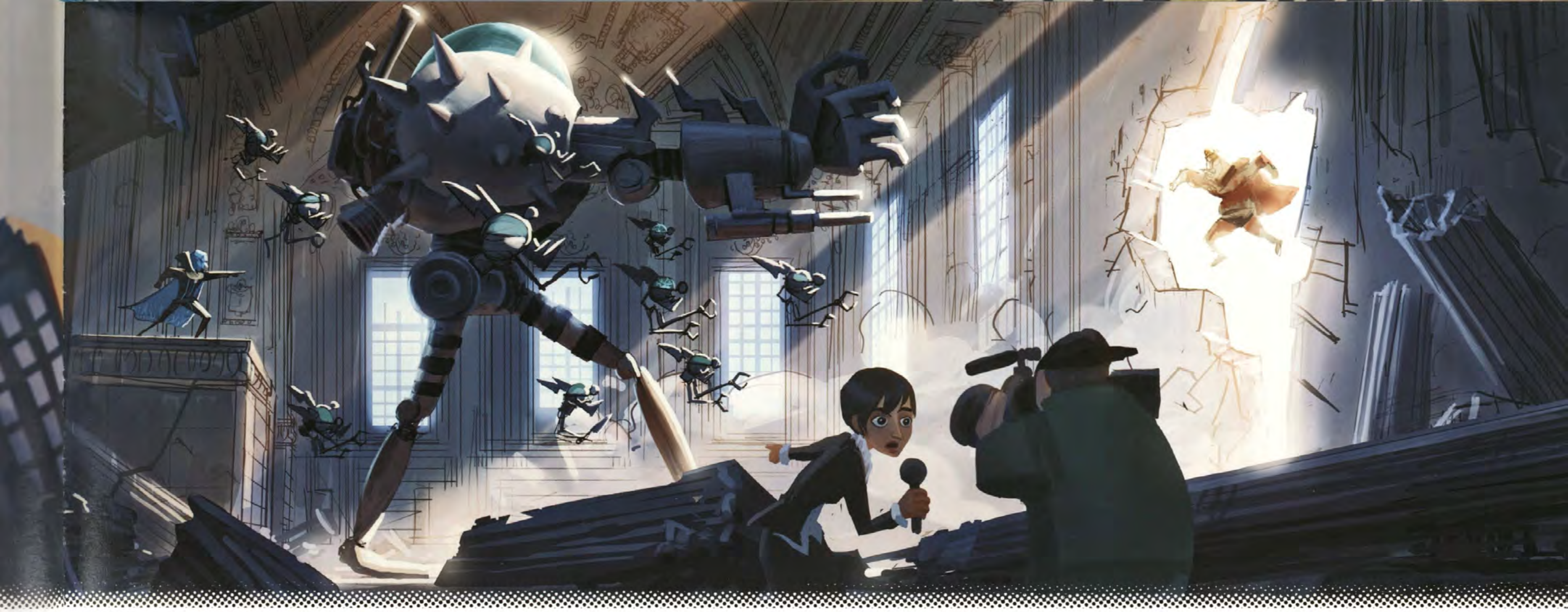
TOOLS OF VILLAINY

Without the atom smashers, ray guns, buzz-saw-armed killbots, and futuremobiles, a supervillain would be just another guy sitting in his room alone. A gadget is an extension of a villain. Sinister on its own, it's both the emblem of his solitude and a triumph over it.

Head of character animation Jason Schleifer says they started figuring out the gear and clothing Megamind would need early on in the filmmaking process: "What kind of machinery does he have? What's his design aesthetic? He's got this robotic arm here, this jet-pack system there. How does that armor work? We were still a couple of years from deadline; it was important to keep this consistent."

When director Tom McGrath came aboard *Megamind*, he had a vision of Megamind's world as being a cross between the *American Chopper* garage and the fabulous Batcave of the 1966–68 *Batman* TV series. Batman's lair, familiar to millions of viewers, was definitely daunting, and perhaps ever so slightly ridiculous: every futuristic machine was clearly labeled for the home viewer. McGrath recalls the Batcave's orderliness: "When Batman and Robin were in their Batsuits, they still wore their laboratory aprons in the cave."

Production designer David James sums up *Megamind* as "a retelling of twentieth-century superhero myths, completely turned on their head." The villain's tools in the film are an integral part of

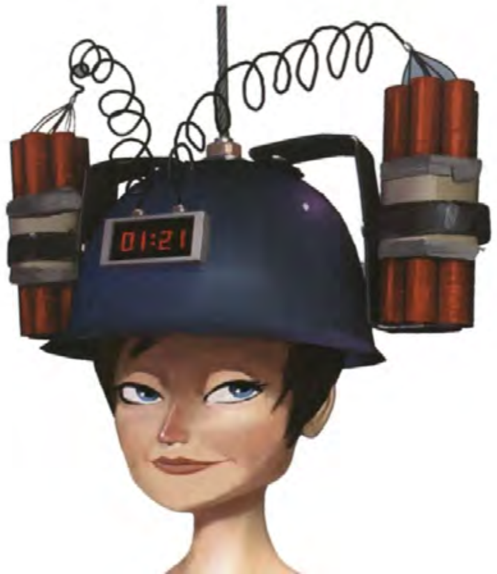


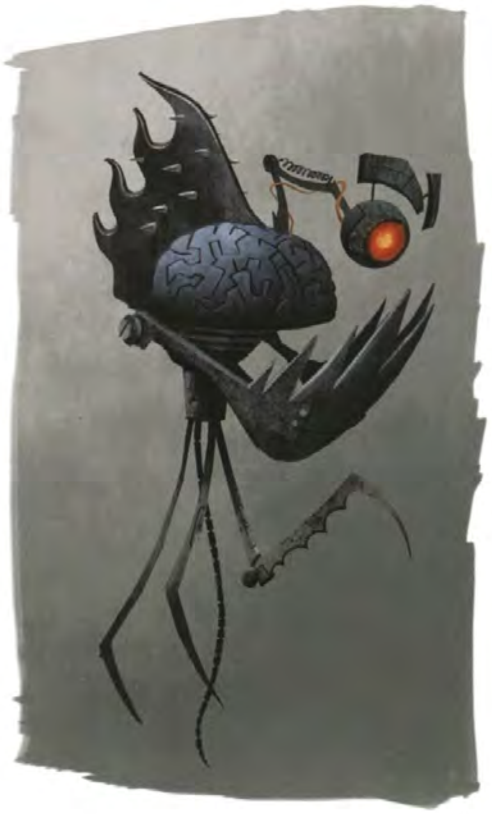
this inversion, as guns, robots, and flying machines have always been essential to the mutual admiration that links comic book heroes and villains. Metro Man needs no gadgets, having all the power in the world; Megamind's task through technology is to get into the superhuman's league, to amp up the stakes in what he calls "the battle of good versus evil, with the world's fate hanging in the balance!"

Yet there's a potential pitfall in making a film like *Megamind*, and it echoes the problem, pervasive in the genre, of letting the wonderful toys eclipse the essential triangle of hero/heroine/villain. While making sure their villainous hero (or heroic villain) had a well-stocked hideout, armory, and robot selection, the filmmakers sought to avoid Megamind becoming a mere showcase for the astounding things that computer animation can make possible. McGrath emphasizes this point: "The thing is to get technology to do what you want it to do, instead of letting it drive you.

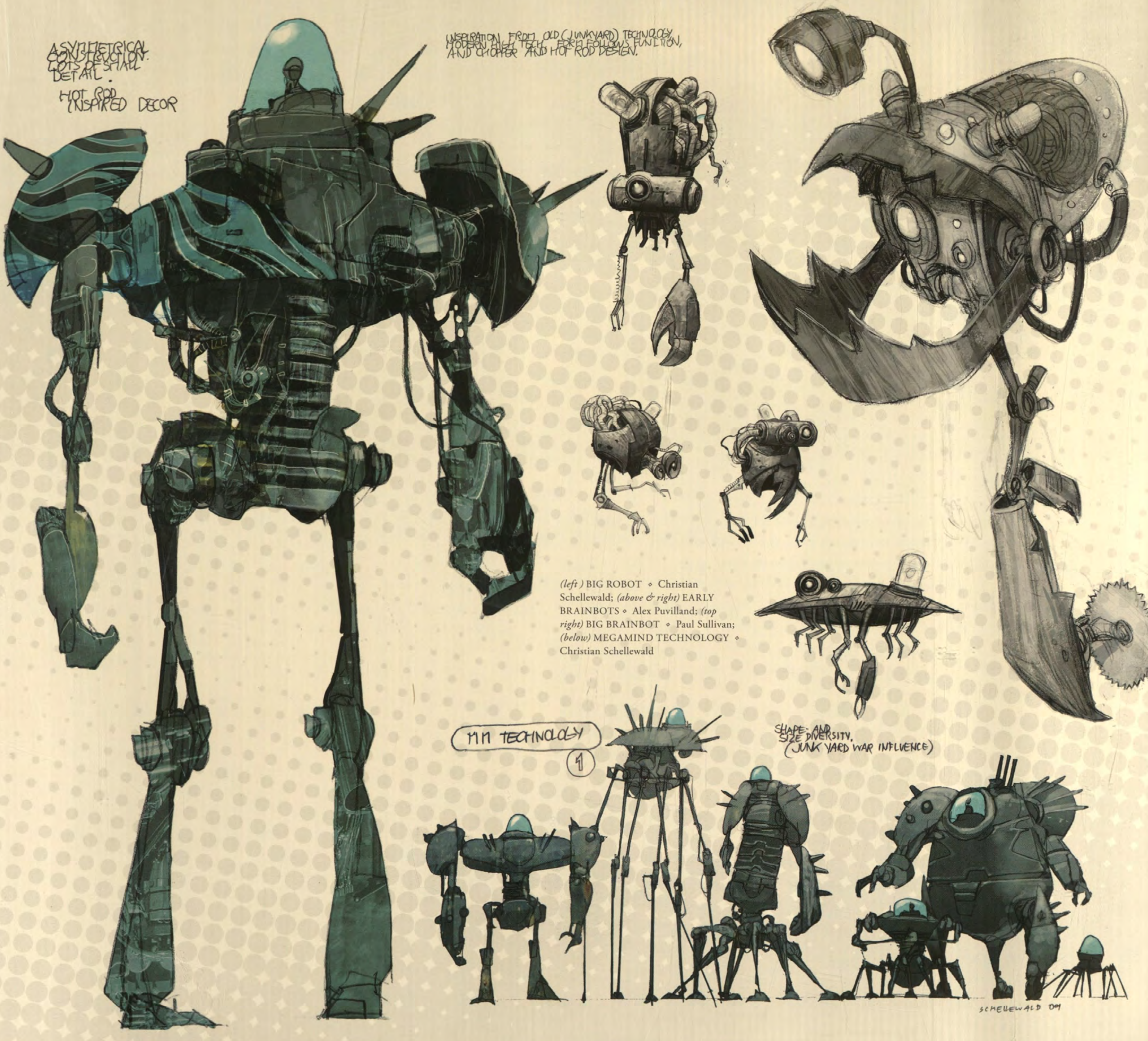
"Everyone who drives this technology is an artist," he adds. "You can talk to them as if they were actors. The beauty of animation is that if you do it right, and have the story straight, every single thing in the movie can be designed to accentuate the story. Even the lighting, or the buildings, or the streets can convey the emotion."

And so can the cars, guns, gadgets, and robots!

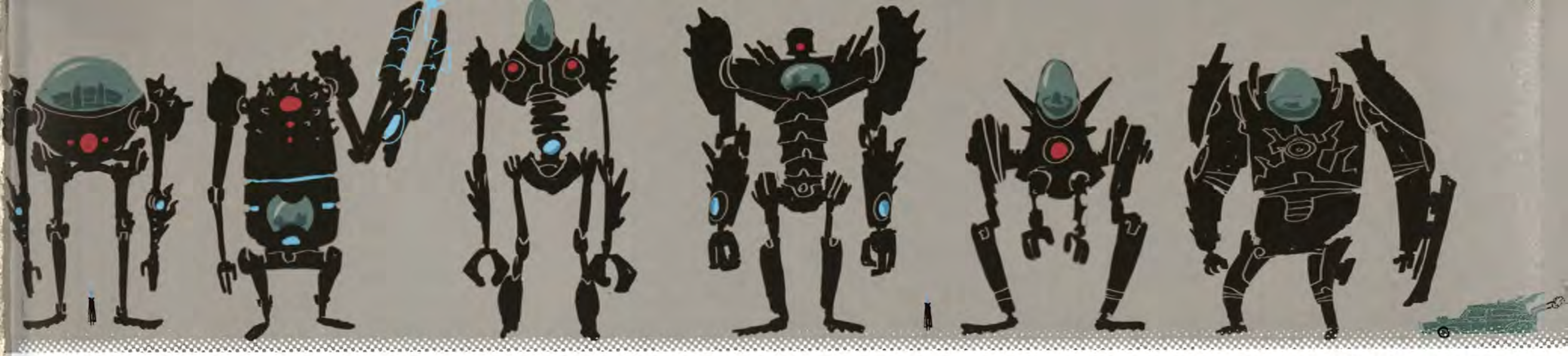




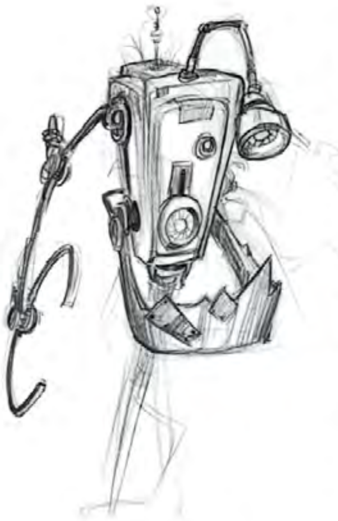
(previous pages) BLUEPRINTS ◦ Chin Ko; *(opposite, top)* GIANT ROBOT GUNS BLAZE ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(opposite, left)* NEW BRAINBOT ◦ Paul Sullivan; *(above)* GIANT ROBOT BATTLE ◦ Erwin Madrid; *(left)* BOMB HAT ◦ Goro Fujita; *(above)* BRAINBOT ◦ Alex Puvilland


ASYMMETRICAL CONSTRUCTION. LOTS OF SMALL DETAIL.
HOT ROD INSPIRED DECOR
INSPIRATION FROM OLD (JUNKYARD) TECHNOLOGY, MODERN HIGH TECH. FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION, AND CHOPPER AND HOT ROD DESIGN.
MM TECHNOLOGY
1
SHAPE AND SIZE DIVERSITY. (JUNK YARD WAR INFLUENCE)
SCHELLEWALD 09

(left) BIG ROBOT ◇ Christian Schellewald; *(above & right)* EARLY BRAINBOTS ◇ Alex Puvilland; *(top right)* BIG BRAINBOT ◇ Paul Sullivan; *(below)* MEGAMIND TECHNOLOGY ◇ Christian Schellewald



ROBOTS



Having no friends or followers (beside Minion, of course), Megamind had to build his own. Hence Megamind's little army of flying Brainbots. Visual development artist Alex Puvilland's sketches show different biological influences: lobster claws, jellyfish tendrils, and underslung jaws like those that might adorn metal bulldogs. "They're somewhere between excitable golden retrievers and bear traps," production designer David James explains. "They're Megamind's scary/cute worker bees. They have many permutations. There's only one female among them, like the Smurfs." The tip-off? Her bright pink lipstick.

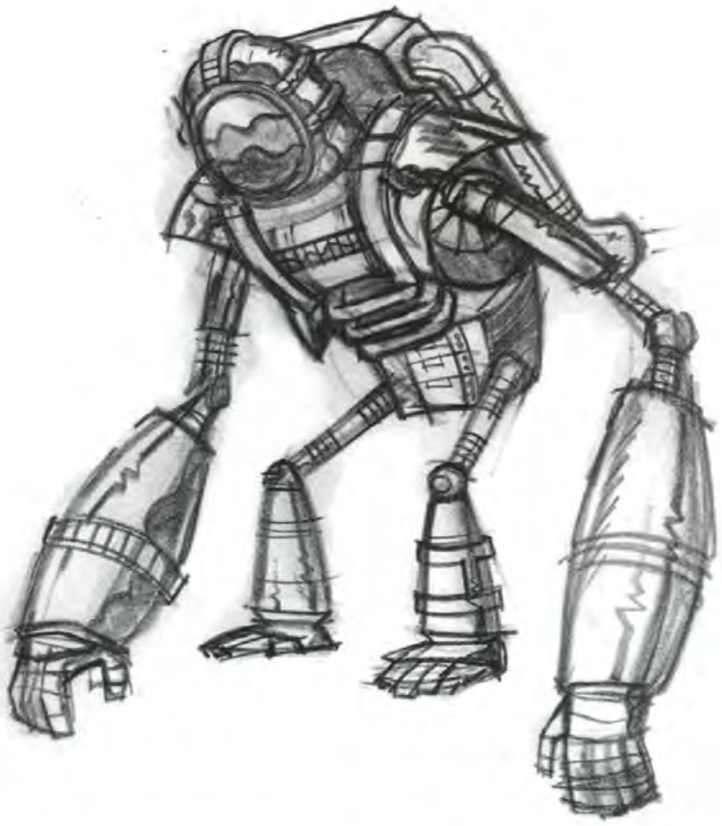
Being faceless, Megamind's mini-minions express themselves through arcs of electric light. "These Brainbot characters have glass-dome heads," head of FX David Lipton explains. "They're plasma balls like you'd see in a lab. We've animated them so that the plasma moves: we're using a system that designates the number of bolts and the speed, so they can show emotion just through electricity."

The animators control the speed of the digital noise. "If they want the Brainbots mad, or to act really dumb, or to act like they're spacing out, they can determine how the electricity in each Brainbot moves and expresses itself," he adds. "For example, there's the scene where Megamind is petting one of the Brainbots, like Blofeld with the white Persian cat, and the electricity follows the motion of his hands. It's really exciting to see animators using our setup in ways we never imagined!"

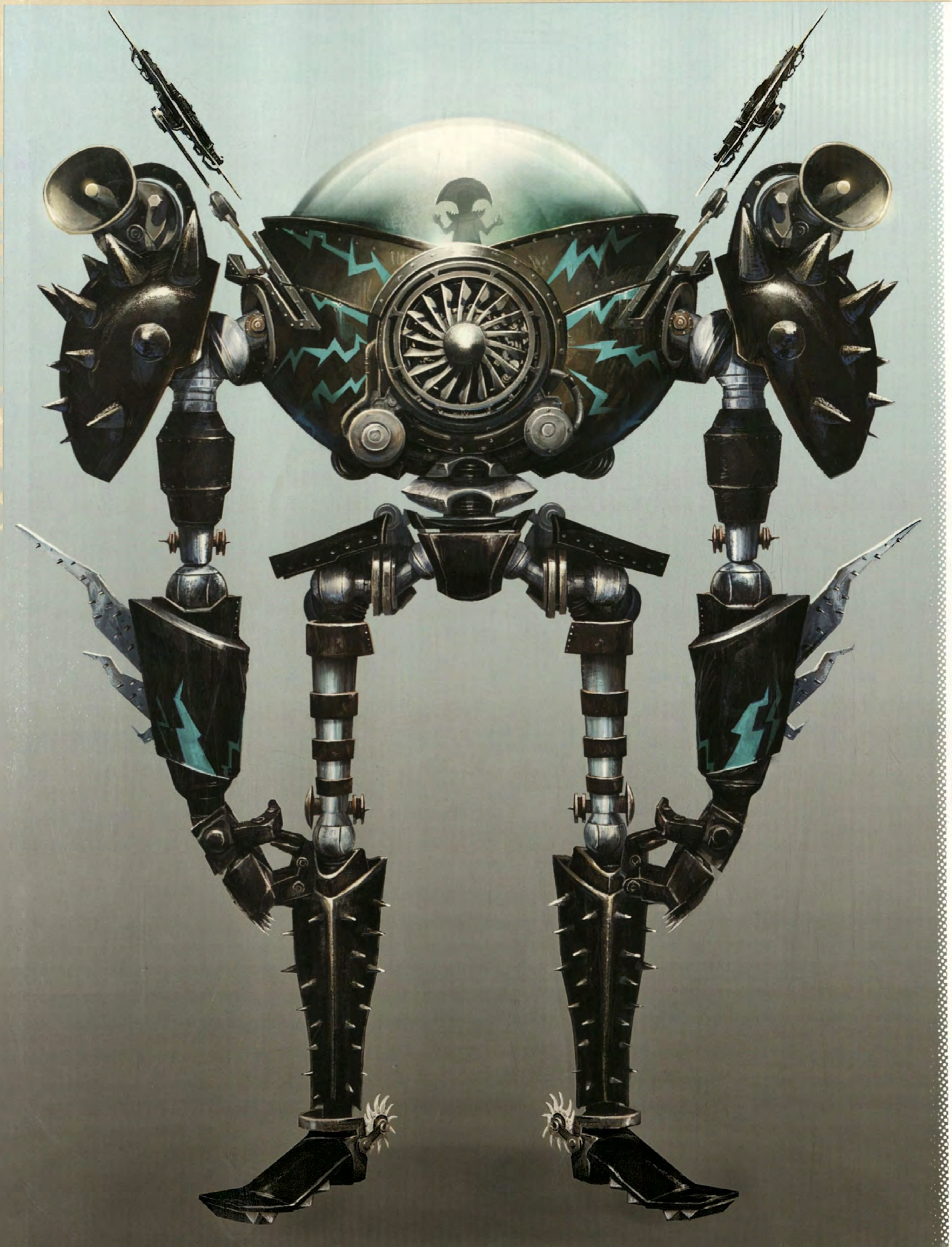
James emphasizes the handmade, sometimes slightly salvaged look of Megamind's robots. "His robots all look like a mishmash of different pieces. His tech is one of the most interesting things in this movie—it's dirty, and it's gritty. We've seen that super kind of sleek design tech in movies. This is the opposite."

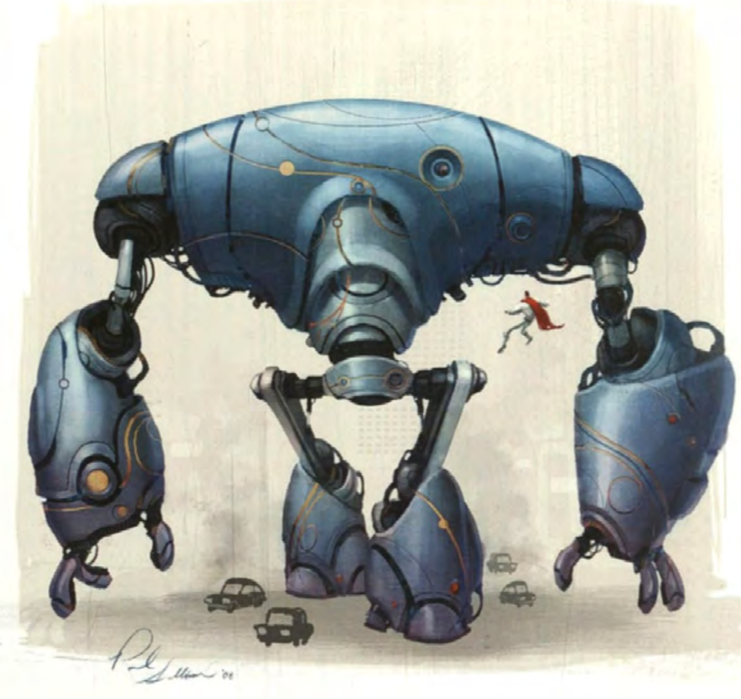
We see a trace of the sleek aesthetic in the towering robots imagined in visual development artist Stan Seo's early sketches, which depict Megamind as almost a mad industrialist: a crazed megalomaniac with a captive electronic audience of classic, Japanese-style colossal robots. These are the ancestors of the one-hundred-foot-tall glass-domed exoskeleton Megamind pilots in his climactic battle against the unstoppable Tighten, envisioned by visual development artist Rich Daskas as an Old West–style showdown between opponents, long shadowed in an alley of skyscrapers.

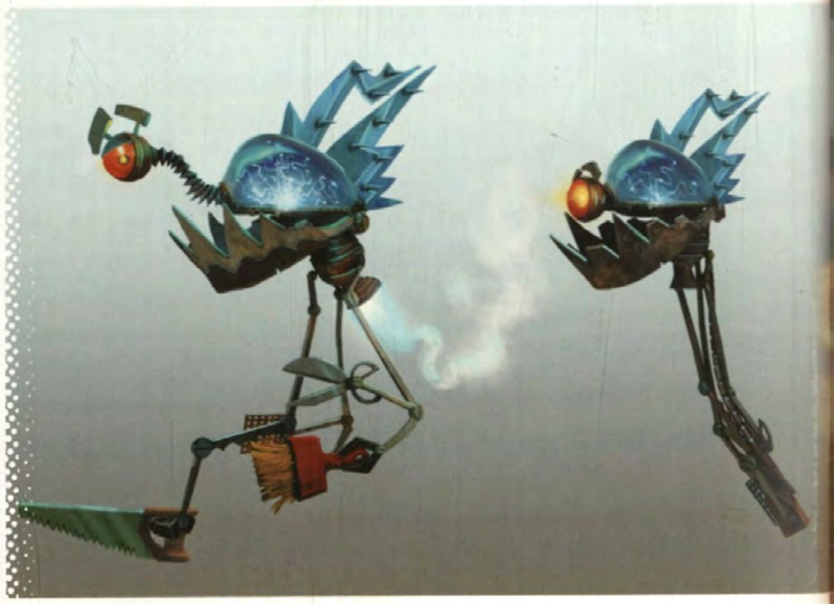
The most outré proposed vision of robotronics, tragically excised from the film, was visual development artist Ruben Hickman's missile-shooting mechanical donkey—a superweapon from which the world is not yet prepared to defend itself.

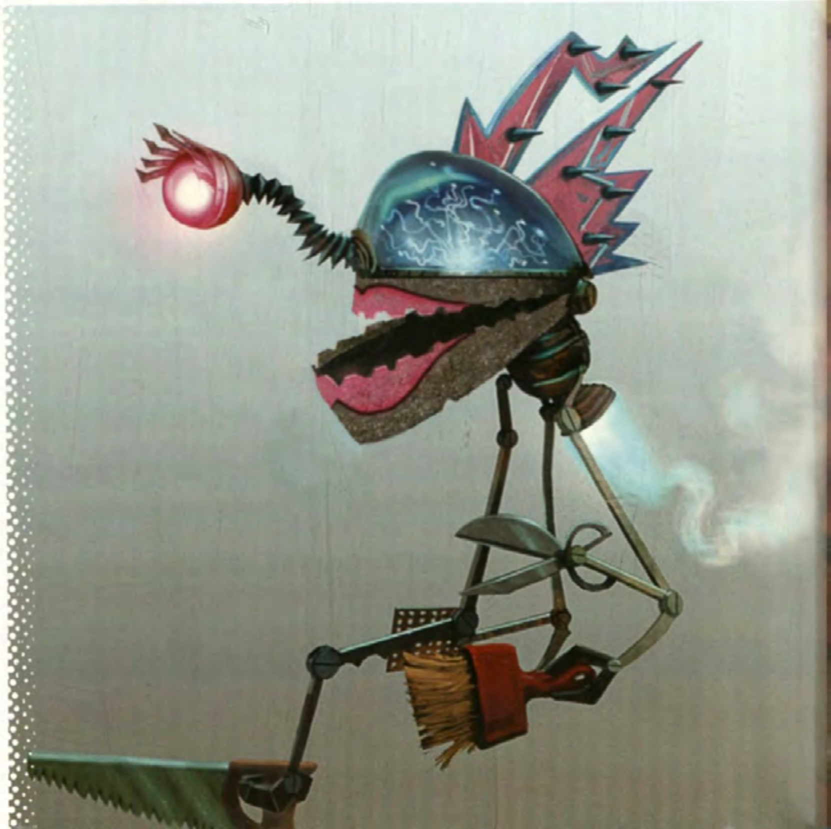


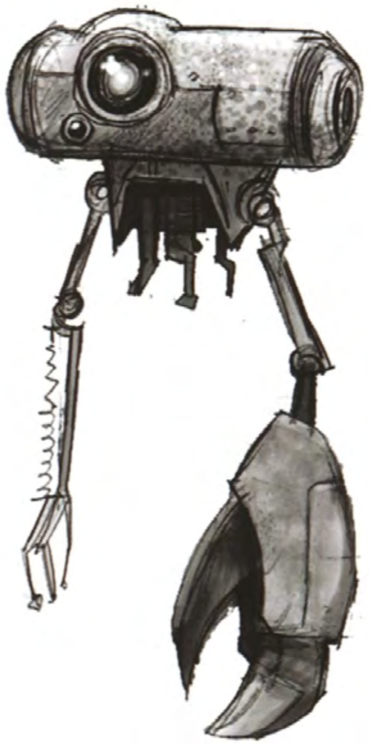
(above) CLUNKY ROBOTS ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(left)* NEW BRAINBOT ◦ Paul Sullivan; *(above)* ROBOT ◦ Andy Bialk



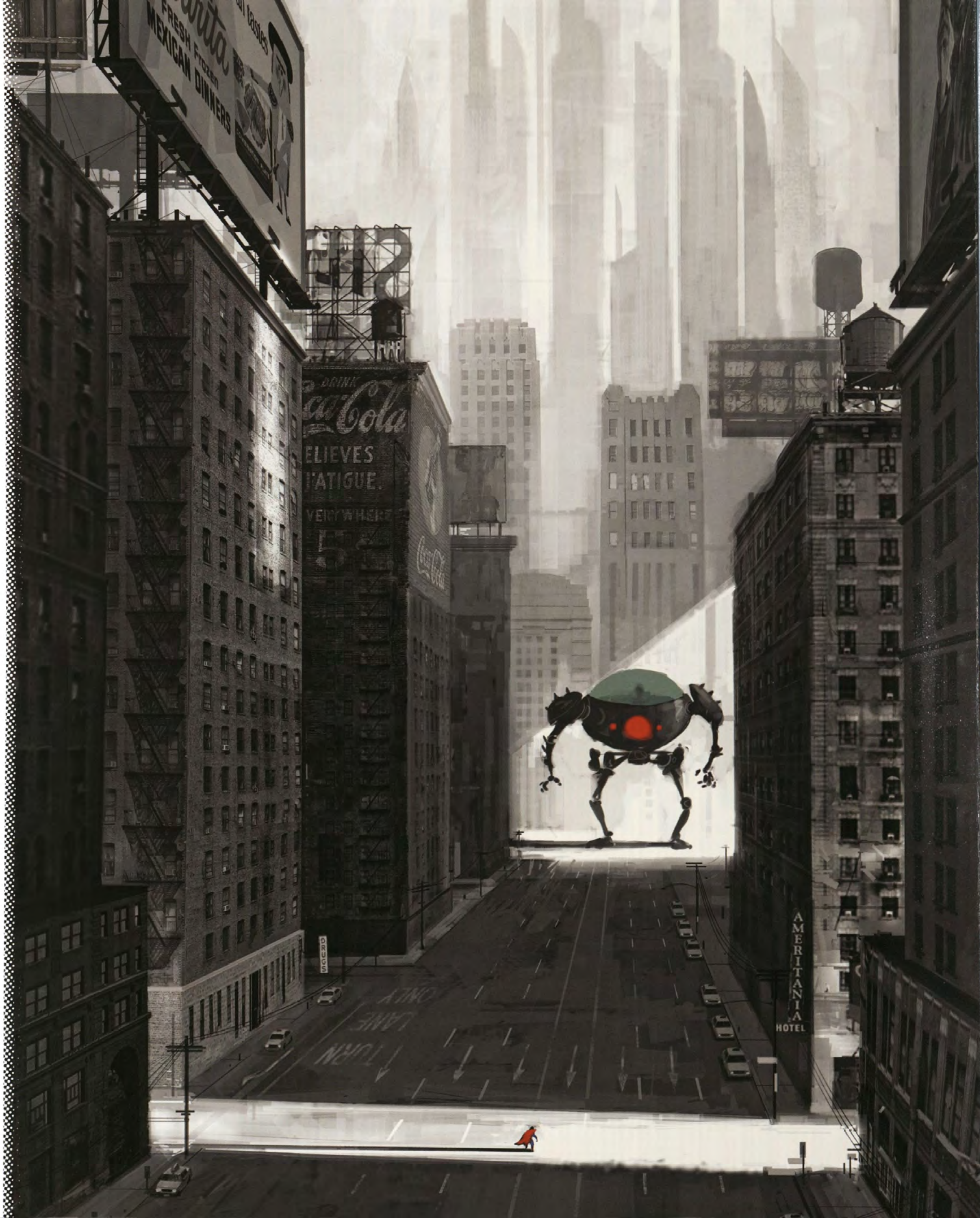








(opposite, clockwise from left) GIANT ROBOT ◦ Chin Ko & Stan Seo; ROBOT ◦ Paul Sullivan & Dermot Power; BRAINBOT ◦ Stan Seo & Alex Puvilland; GIRL BRAINBOT ◦ Chin Ko; *(above)* BRAINBOT ◦ Alex Puvilland; *(right)* STANDOFF IN THE CITY ◦ Rich Daskas; *(inside gatefold)* MEGAMIND & TIGHTEN BATTLE ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(following pages)* FREEWAY ACTION ◦ Erwin Madrid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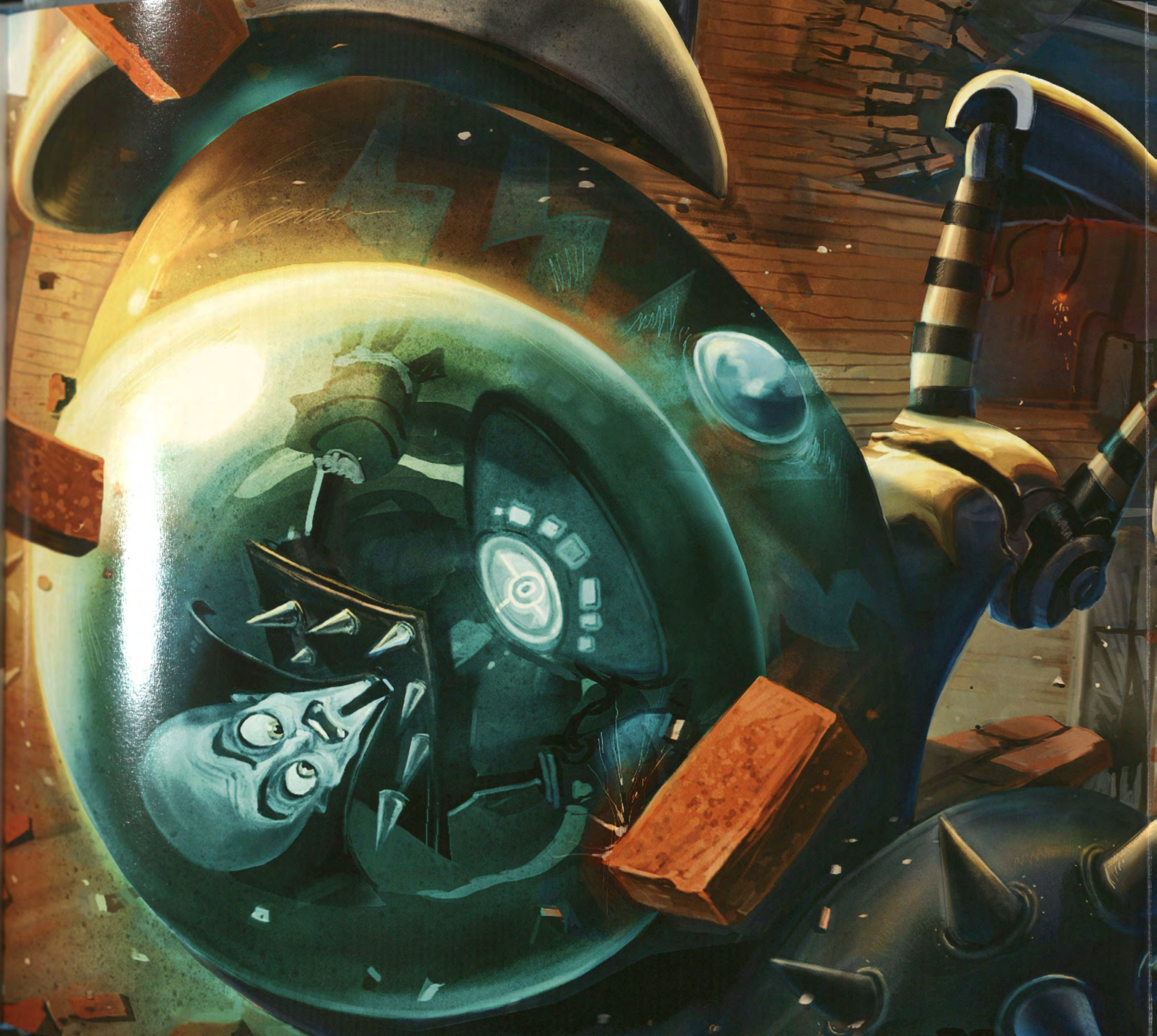

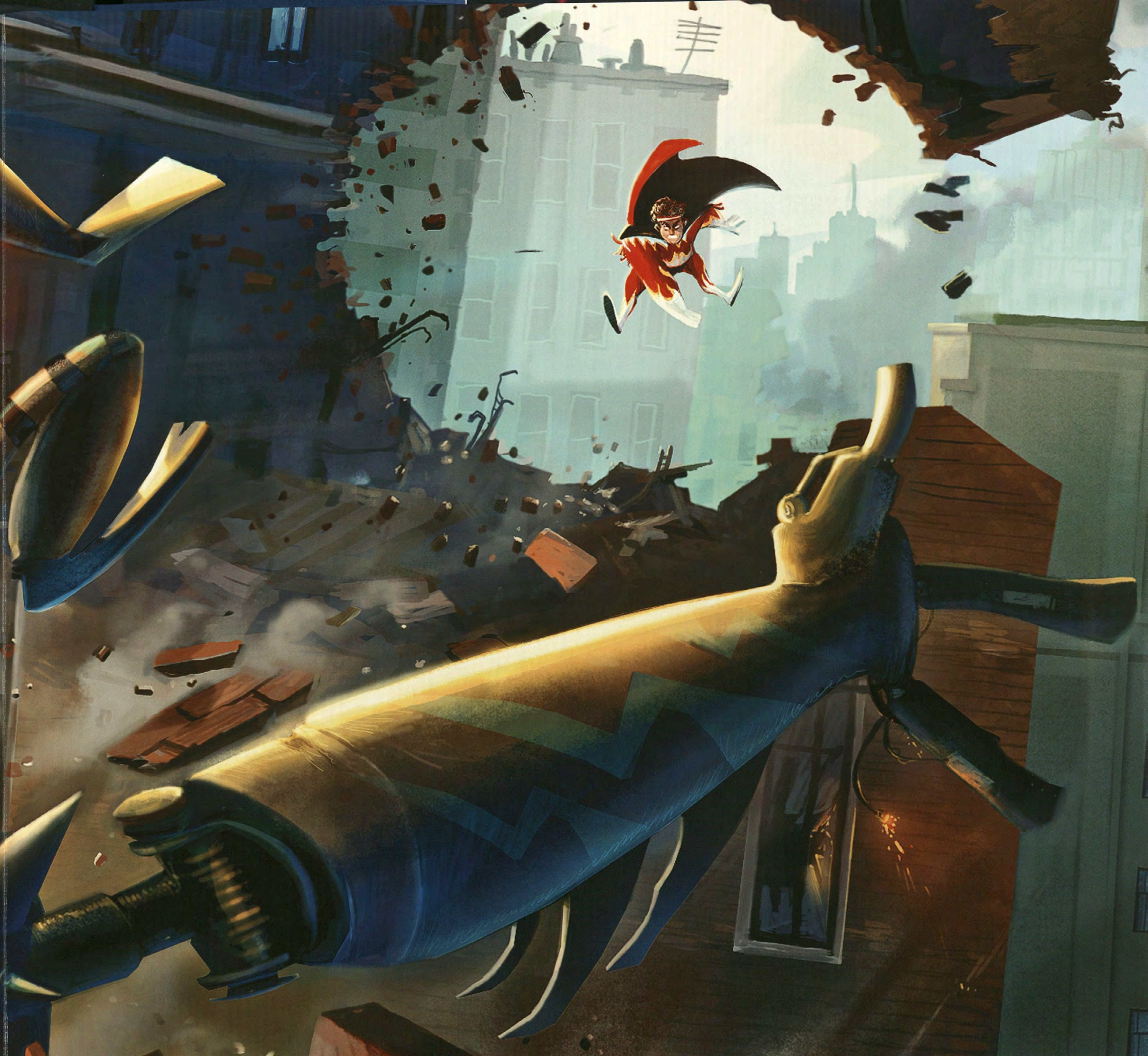

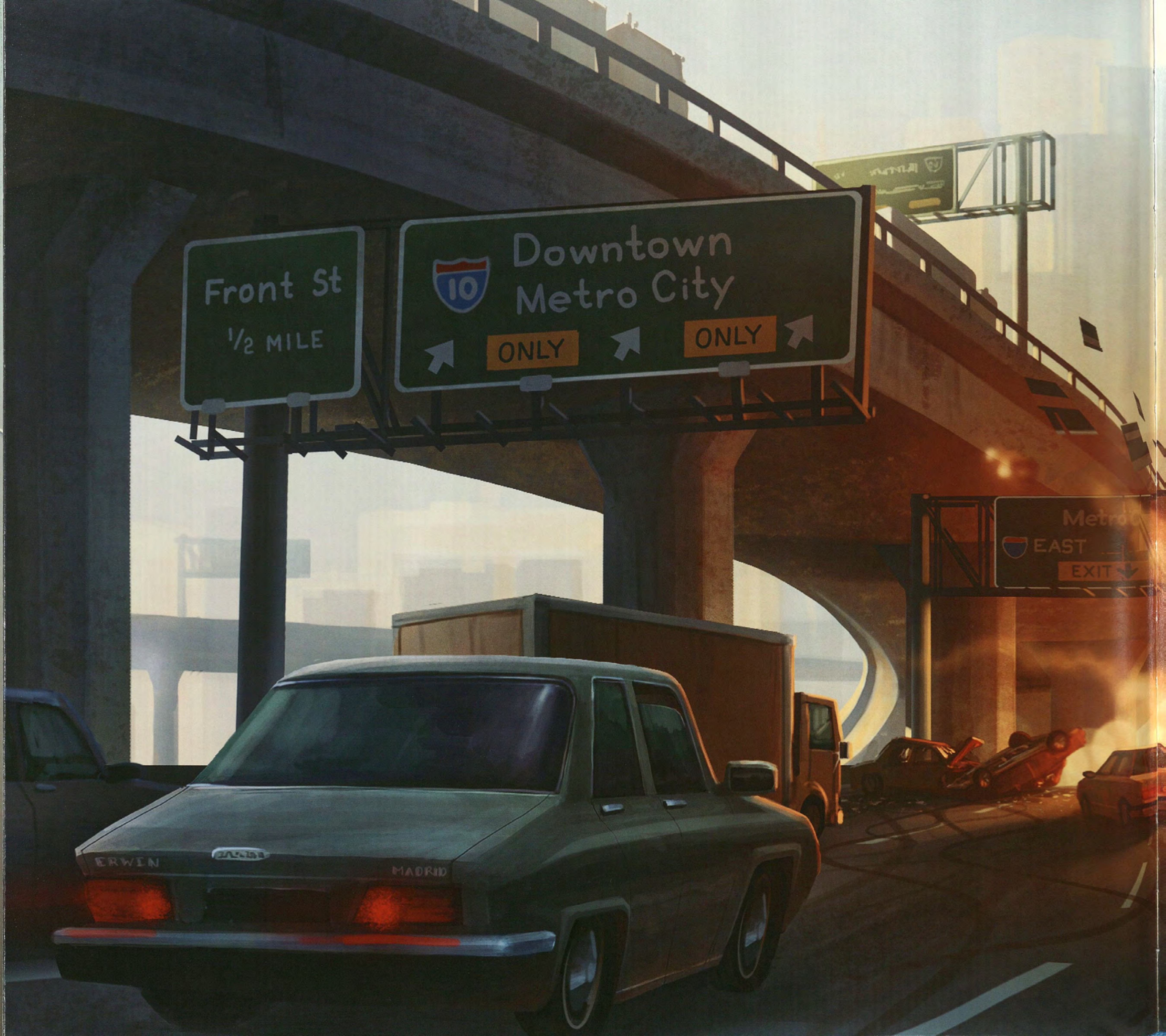
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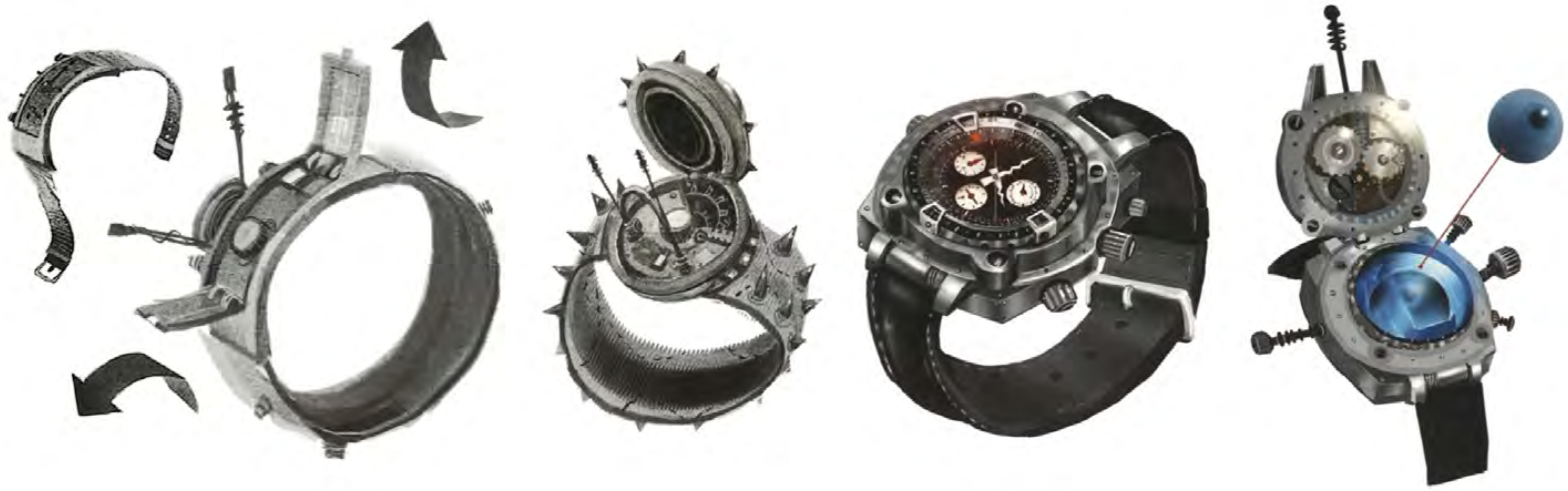


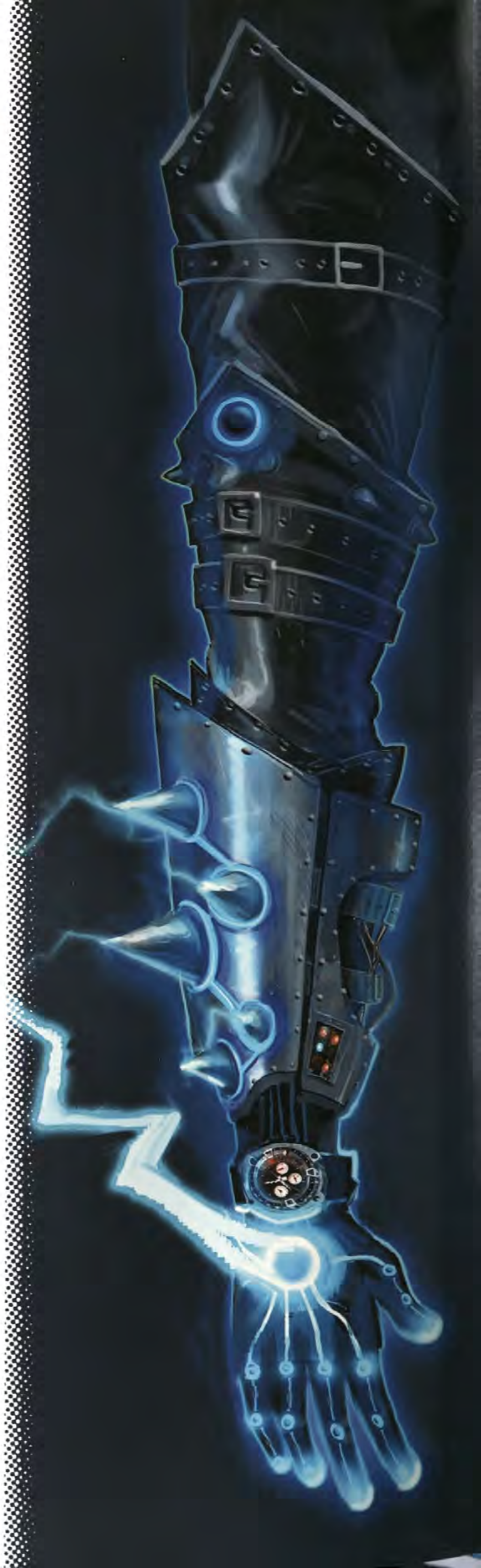
GADGETS

Where does one go when searching for models for mad-scientist equipment? "Romania," says production designer David James, quoting a punch line from *Megamind*'s script. "Most of the stuff is inspired by things culled from the Internet and genre films. We don't always have the luxury of being able to filter these things through the imagination, so we go looking for images. Generally, when we find them, they're more fantastic and out of scale than we'd hoped."

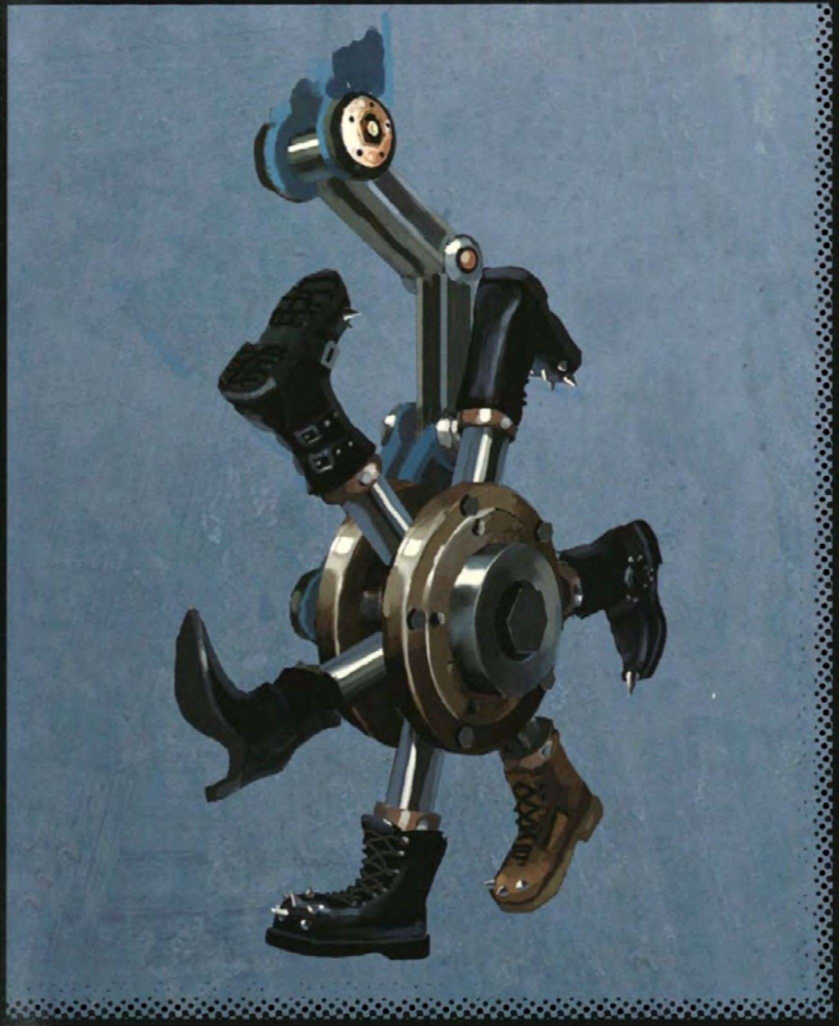
Megamind is, as director Tom McGrath points out, a character meant to honor inventor Nikola Tesla, a shunned figure devoted to mechanical wizardry and high voltage. Tesla's famous coils inspired legendary Hollywood set designer and special effects creator Ken "Mr. Electric" Strickfaden to create a distinct look for the labs of movie and TV mad scientists and supervillains in many productions from the 1931 film version of *Frankenstein* onward.

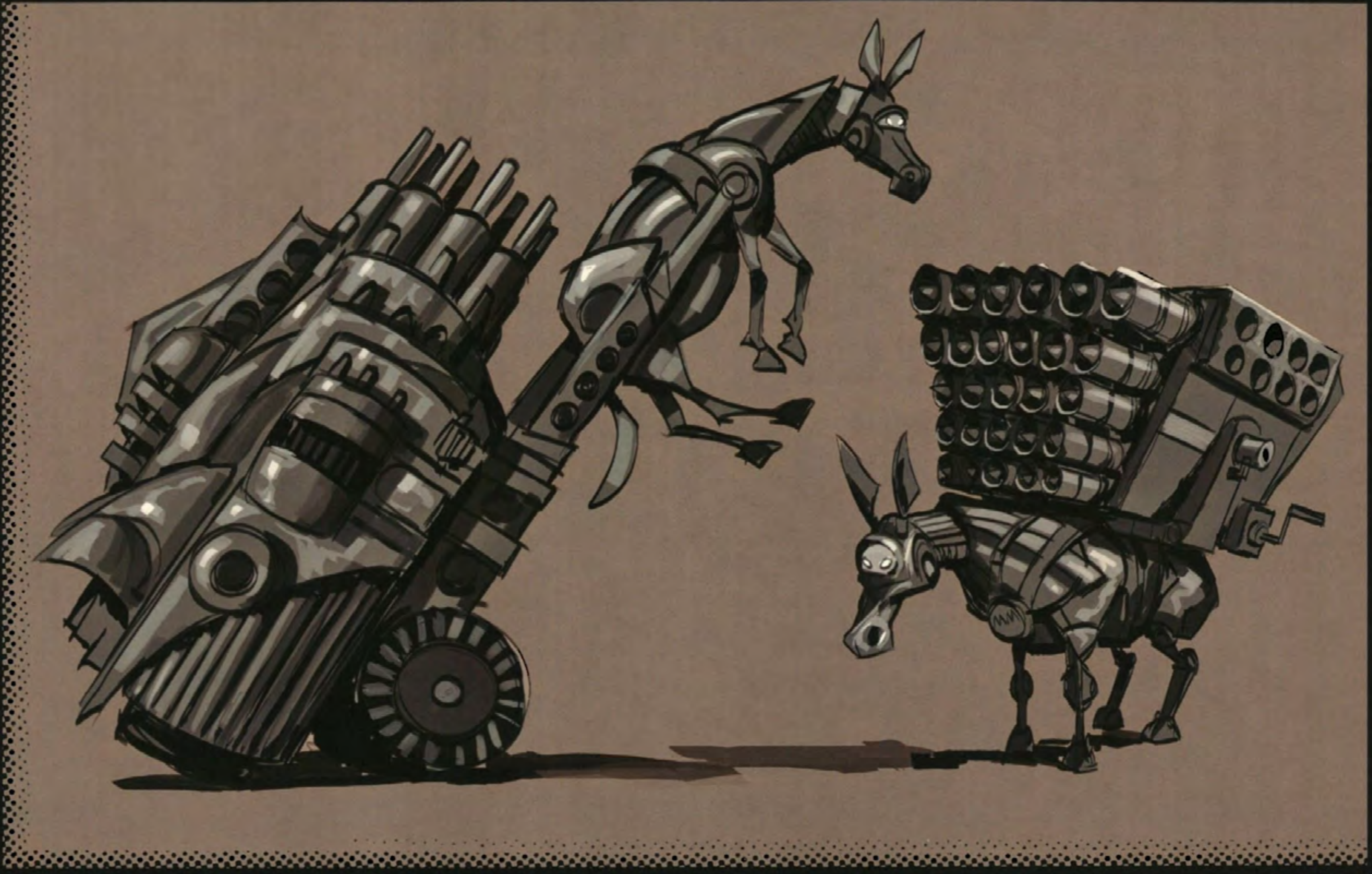
Megamind celebrates this legacy, and Megamind is clearly Strickfaden's disciple: his orbiting Sun Amplifier, with stout Depression-era electrodes protruding from its side, has both the retro and the modern means for flash frying a superhero. The DNA Machine, with which a remorseful Megamind transfers the power of the departed Metro Man, is a towering atomic microscope, decorated with dog-collar spikes and emitting torcs of energy that look like floating, glowing Hula-Hoops. Megamind's Art Deco ray gun, meanwhile, with a flame-decorated, teardrop-shaped grip, has three settings, including Dehydrate, a useful method of getting someone out of the way without causing permanent harm.

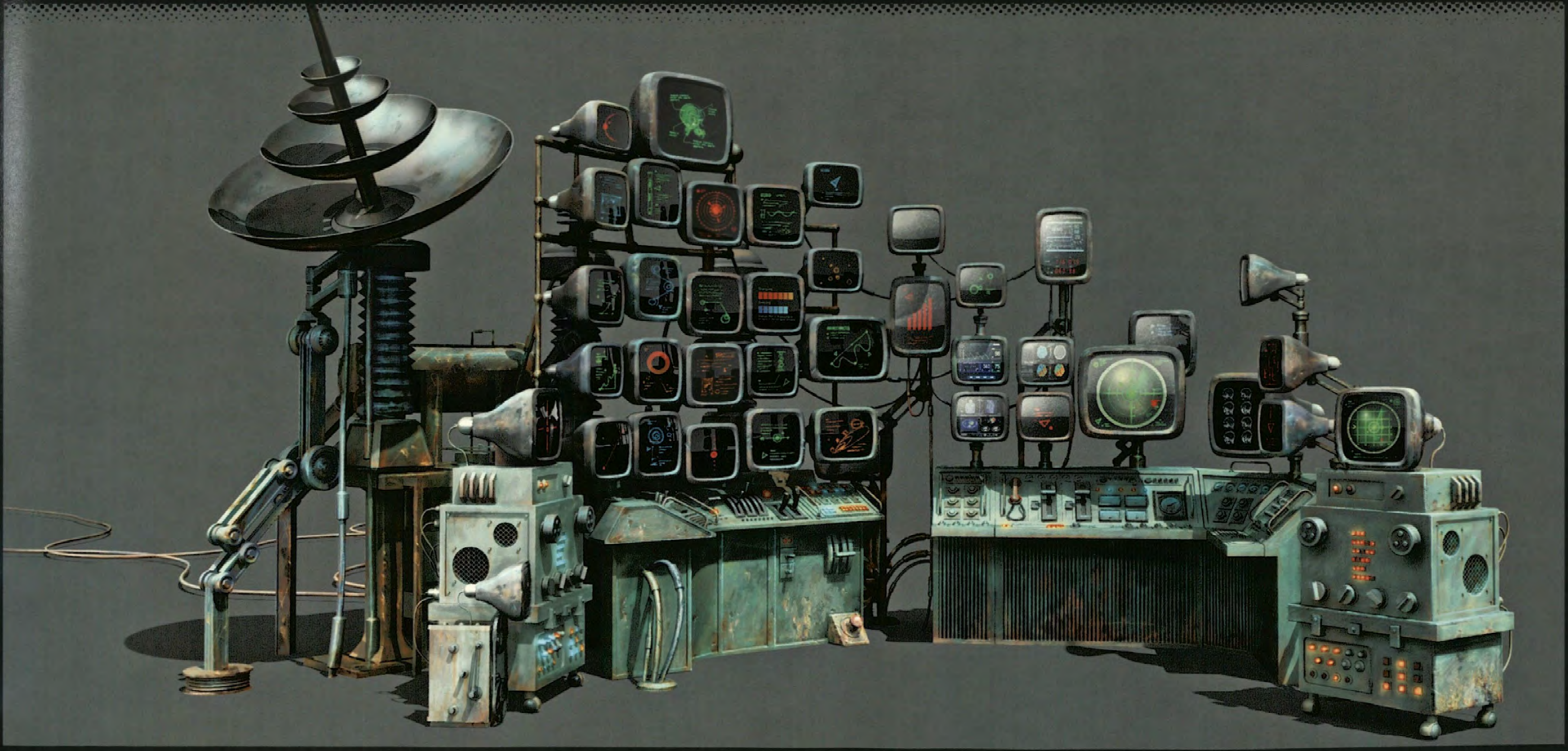
For very special occasions, Megamind gets out his Black Mamba outfit, complete with black cape, studs, and fearsome electric glove. The power glove, like Megamind's solar-powered death satellite and his invisible car, are animated tributes to the single most grab-bag-esque of all James Bond movies, 2002's *Die Another Day*. Head of FX David Lipton saw to it that the Black Mamba's right glove, along with the robot itself, crackled with blue electricity: "It syncs up with Megamind; he moves, and the robot moves."

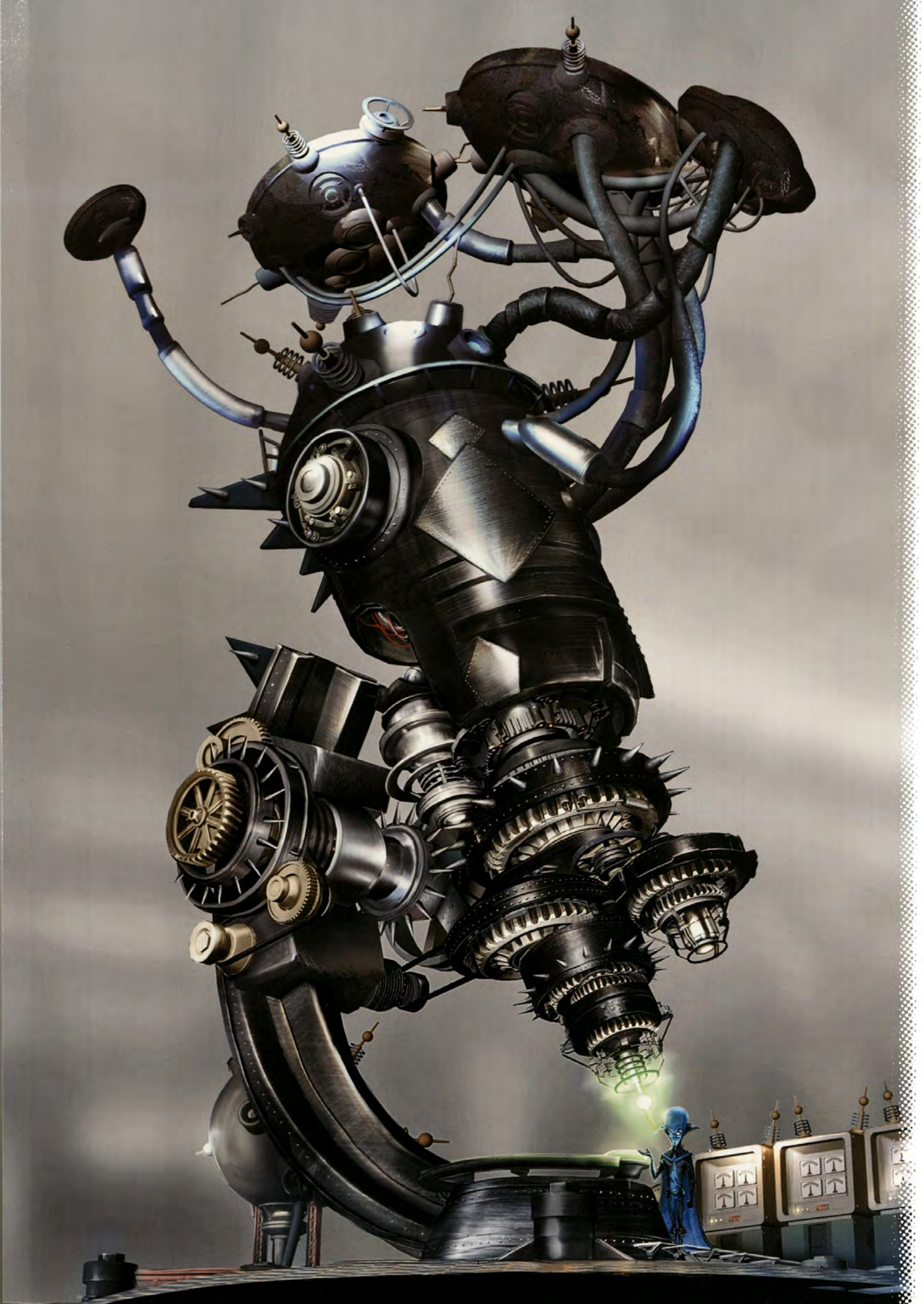


(top) DISGUISE GENERATOR ◦ Chin Ko; *(right)* BLACK MAMBA GLOVE ◦ Chin Ko; *(opposite, top left)* BOOT DRILL ◦ Goro Fujita; *(opposite, top right)* DONKEYS ◦ Ruben Hickman; *(opposite, bottom)* LAIR MEDIA CENTER ◦ Stan Seo







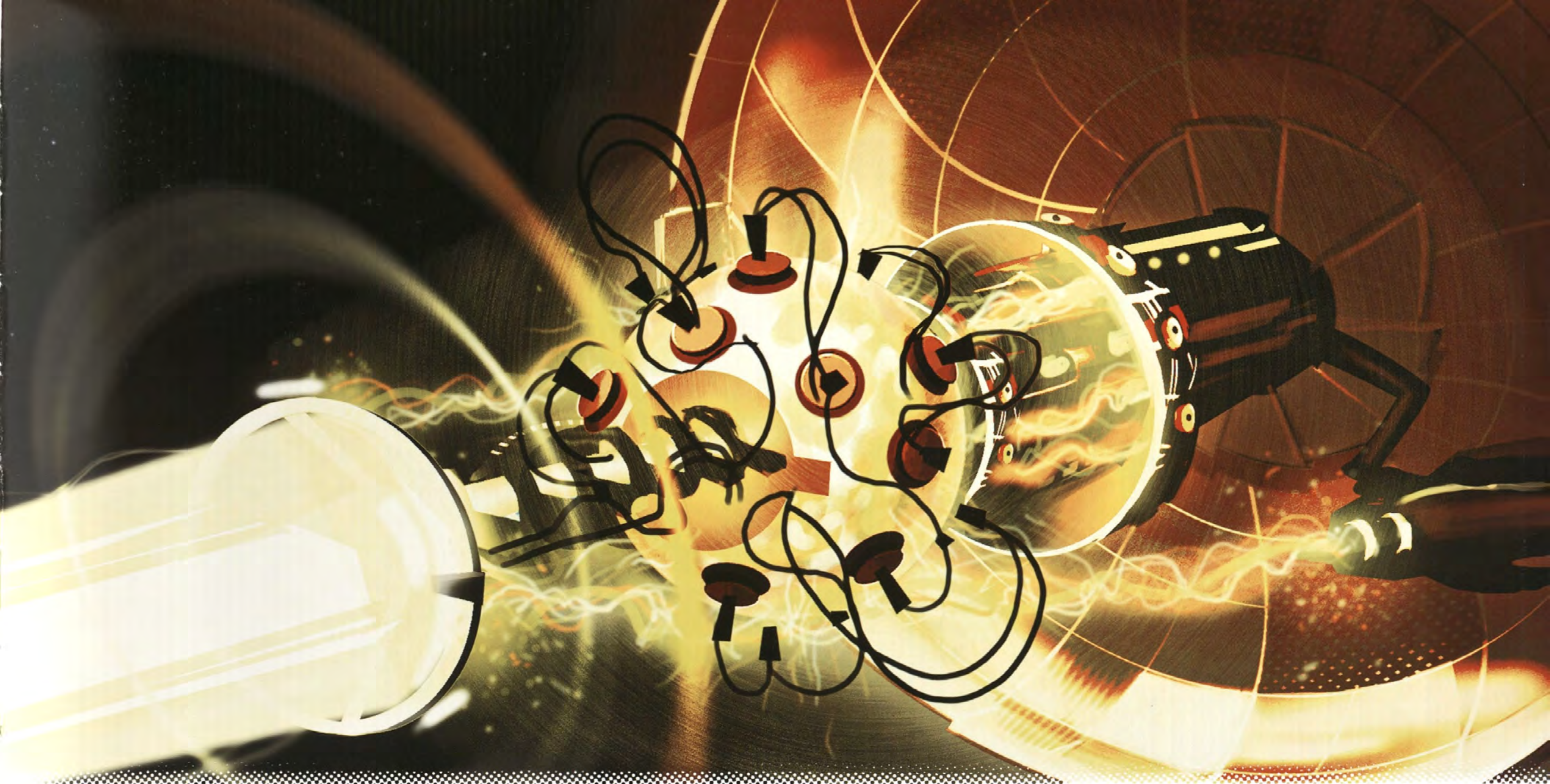


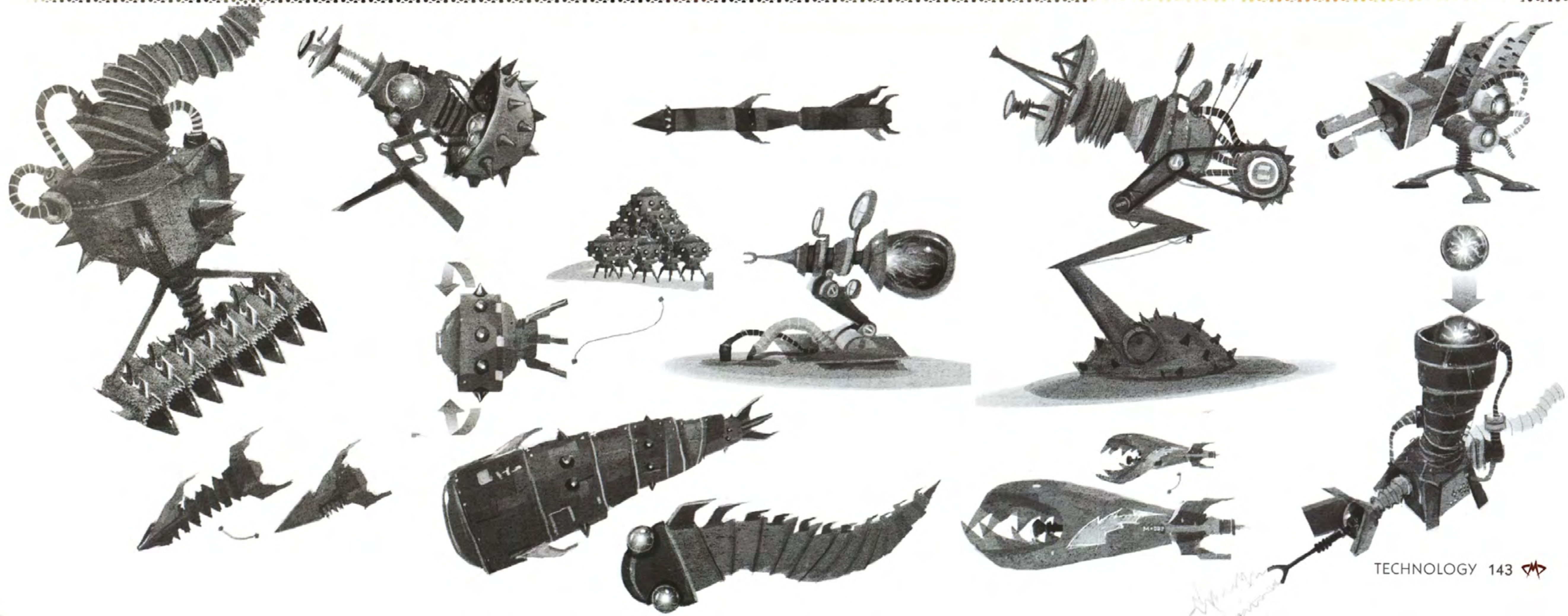
> **"We're doing a lot of demolition, you know. Blowing holes in buildings, robots busting holes in things or crashing through the streets, big fireballs, lasers, electric bolts sparking from things."**
>
> —DAVID LIPTON, HEAD OF FX

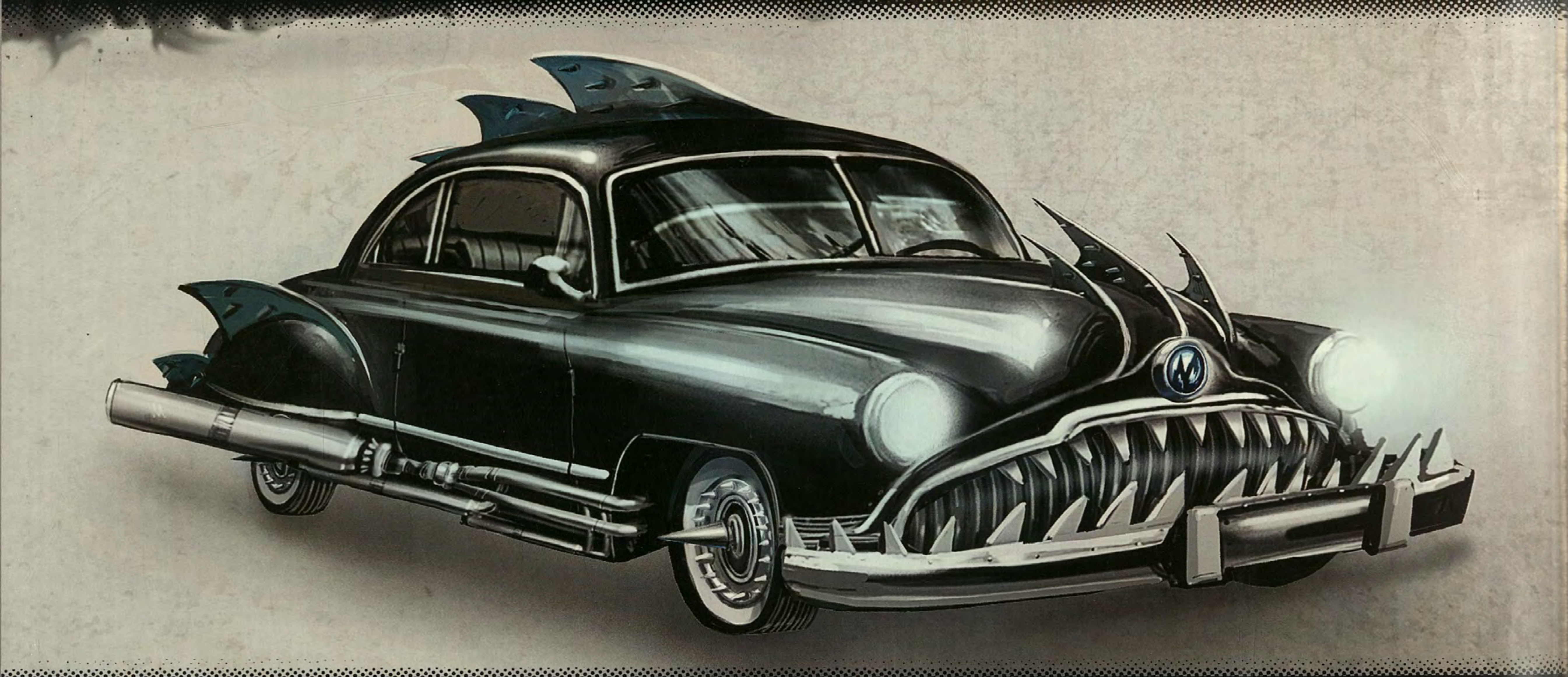
To make the bolts and death rays eye popping, visual effects supervisor Philippe Denis used a new technique called high-dynamic-range imaging. "We conserve the colors even when the brights go to white," Denis explains. "When you use your camera to take a picture on a sunny day, you change your exposure to adjust for the brights or for the darks. It's the same thing here. We adjust the exposure to serve the visual, so that when you have an explosion to treat, for example, the brights will appear brighter because, in comparison, the background colors at proximity are so dark. We try to imbue those elements with a high dynamic range and keep their color, even though they may be so bright they appear white on the screen—as in the case of a blue ray that's so bright, it becomes white at its core even though the glow surrounding it is blue, giving the effect a great sense of luminosity."

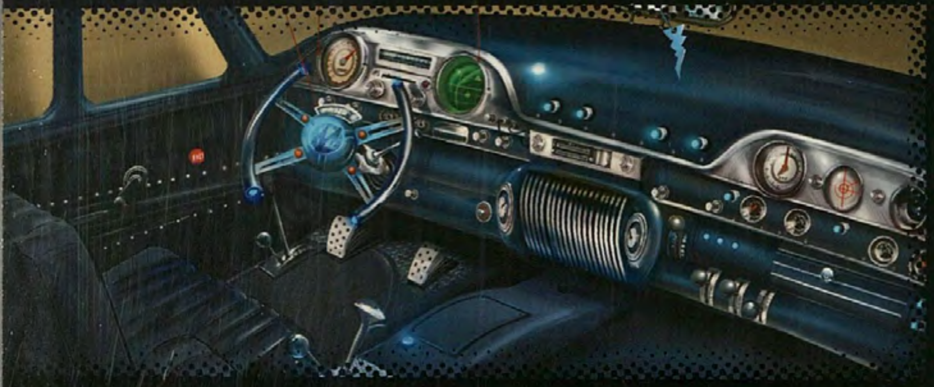
The bolts, sparks, and death rays won't be spraying the audience too often, despite the 3D. Lipton adds: "Sometimes, we think, 'Wouldn't it be cool if something came right at the camera?' But then we have to consider the viewing experience. We don't try to go over the top with it. It's kind of nice when you're immersed in a film. Something jumping out of the screen tends to knock you out of it."

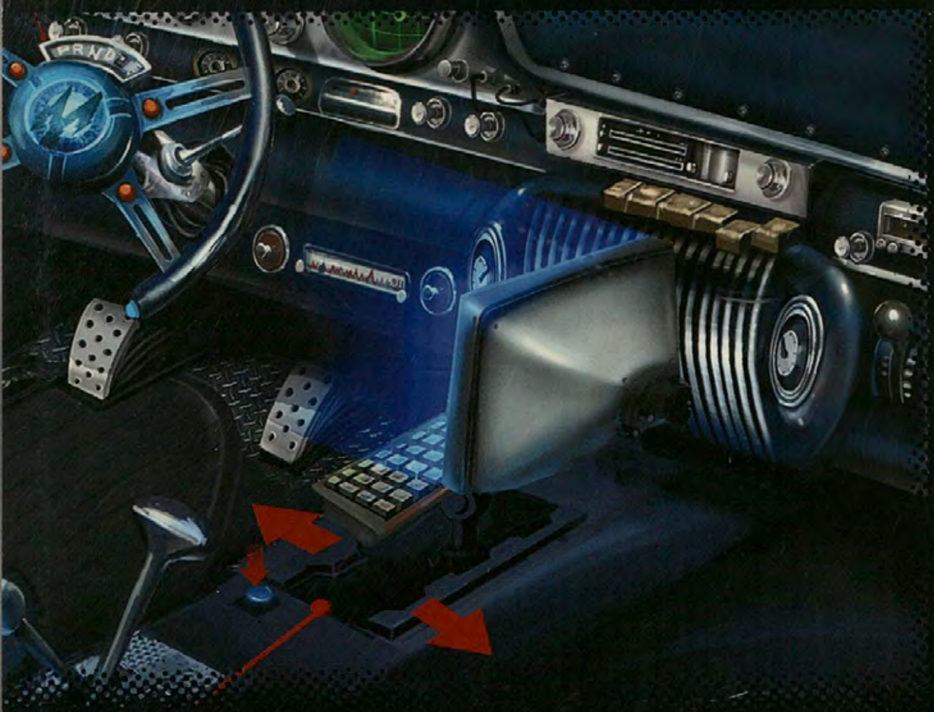
(left) DNA MACHINE ◦ Painting by Chin Ko, design & modeling by Stan Seo *(opposite, top)* DEATH RAY ◦ Travis Koller; *(opposite, bottom)* WEAPONS ◦ Chin Ko







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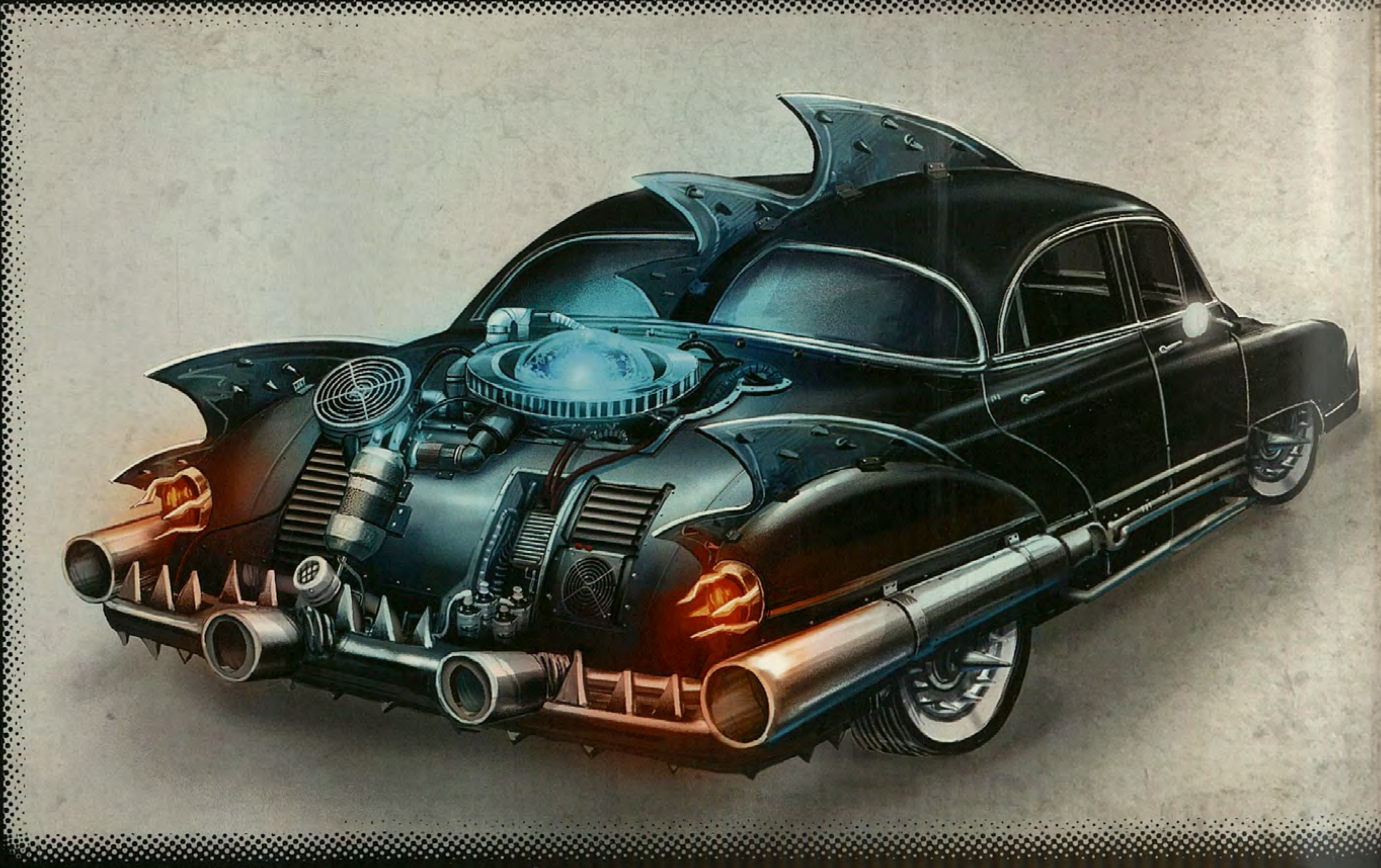
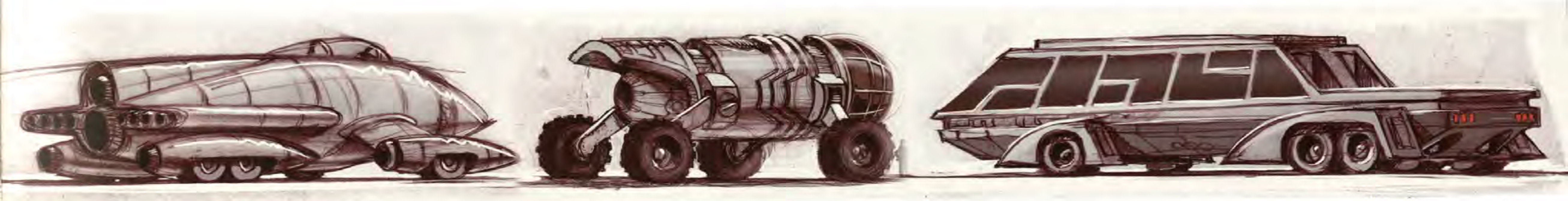
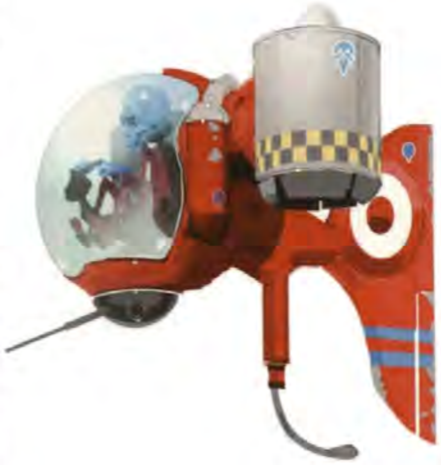




VEHICLES



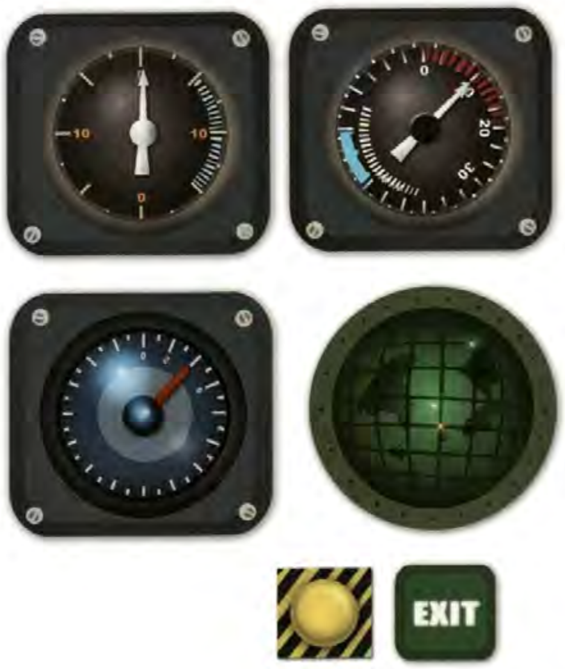
Megamind's invisible car needed a new style of animation, something beyond the customary way invisibility has been treated in fantasy films. Head of FX David Lipton points to the research done by Susumu Tachi, a professor of media design and creator of the as-seen-on-the-Internet "invisibility cloak," as essential inspiration. Tachi's cloak is a grey plastic rain jacket chemically treated to project images on its front that have been captured behind it by a digital camera. "It almost looks like they recorded it and projected it on his jacket, so it's a little bit delayed, a little bit off," Lipton adds. "That's what we were looking for."

And yet some designs for Megamind's car emphasized the opposite of invisibility. Approved designs and the model sheet for the invisible car by visual development artist Chin Ko referenced the American automotive industry's rudest era, the 1950s. Megamind's quadruple-exhaust, saber-tooth-grilled bulgemobile with fins comes complete with monogrammed "MM" medallion, shielding what certainly must be a V-24 engine. Visual development artist Peter Maynez's proposed vehicles also have a 1950s look but are slightly more nostalgic: something like a superpowered Airstream travel trailer, or a six-wheeled armored Country Squire station wagon with metal paneling—the ultimate suburban assault vehicle.

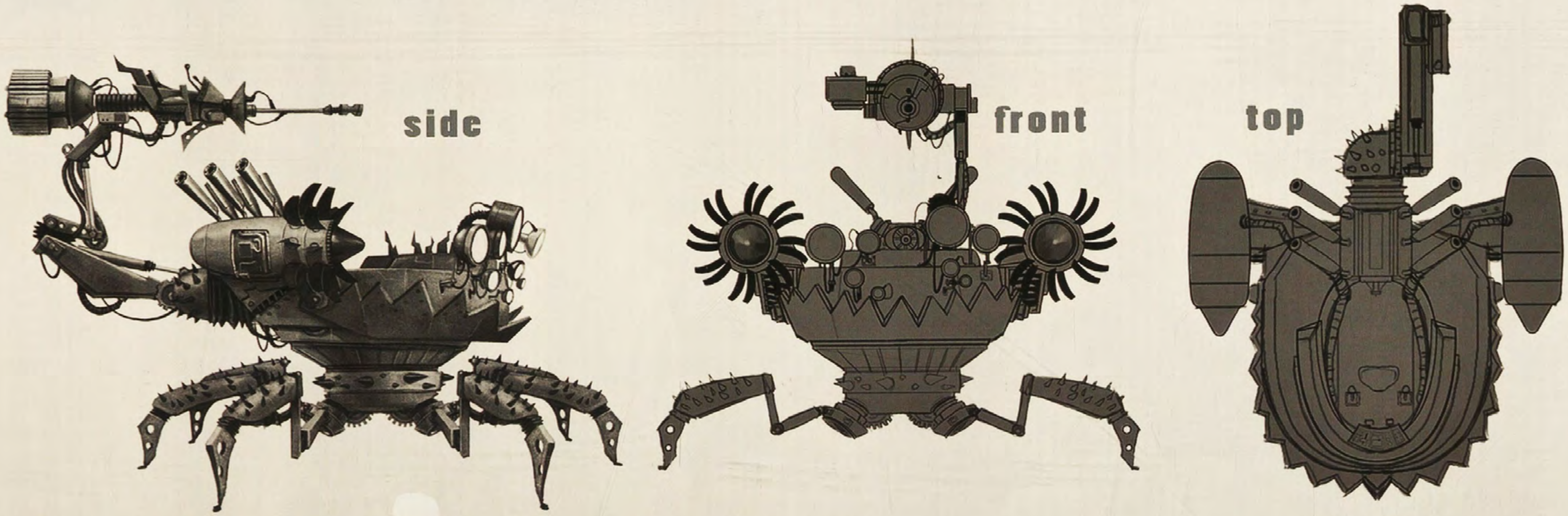
Certainly, the various makes and remodels of the fabulous Batmobile were inspirations for Megamind's ride. The term for Batman's car was first used by DC Comics in 1941, but by the end of World War II, the vehicle, once described as the embodiment of "weird design and blinding speed," had jet engines and closed-circuit television. Later came the preposterous elongation, the aerodynamic fins, and sharp points reflected (and exaggerated) here in various proposed Megamindmobiles—most extremely in the form of a catamaran-shaped interceptor drawn by Maynez.

Before the production reached this final concept, visual development artist Dermot Power proposed a series of aerial chase vehicles that salute 1960s cinema. Power's other flying-machine concept, though, is closer to the designs of a different nexus of cool: the *2001: A Space Odyssey* pod, but updated with commuter-friendly luggage bins, bucket seats, and air fresheners—a luxury sky ride for Megamind and Roxanne Ritchi.

The final version of Megamind's personal aircraft, though, returns to Earth and is more grounded in reality. As production designer David James describes it, it's "like a P-38 engine mounted on a Harley-Davidson frame."



(opposite) INVISIBLE CAR ◦ Chin Ko; *(top)* VEHICLES ◦ Peter Maynez; *(left)* CHASE VEHICLE CONCEPT ◦ Dermot Power; *(above)* INVISIBLE CAR DIALS ◦ Chin Ko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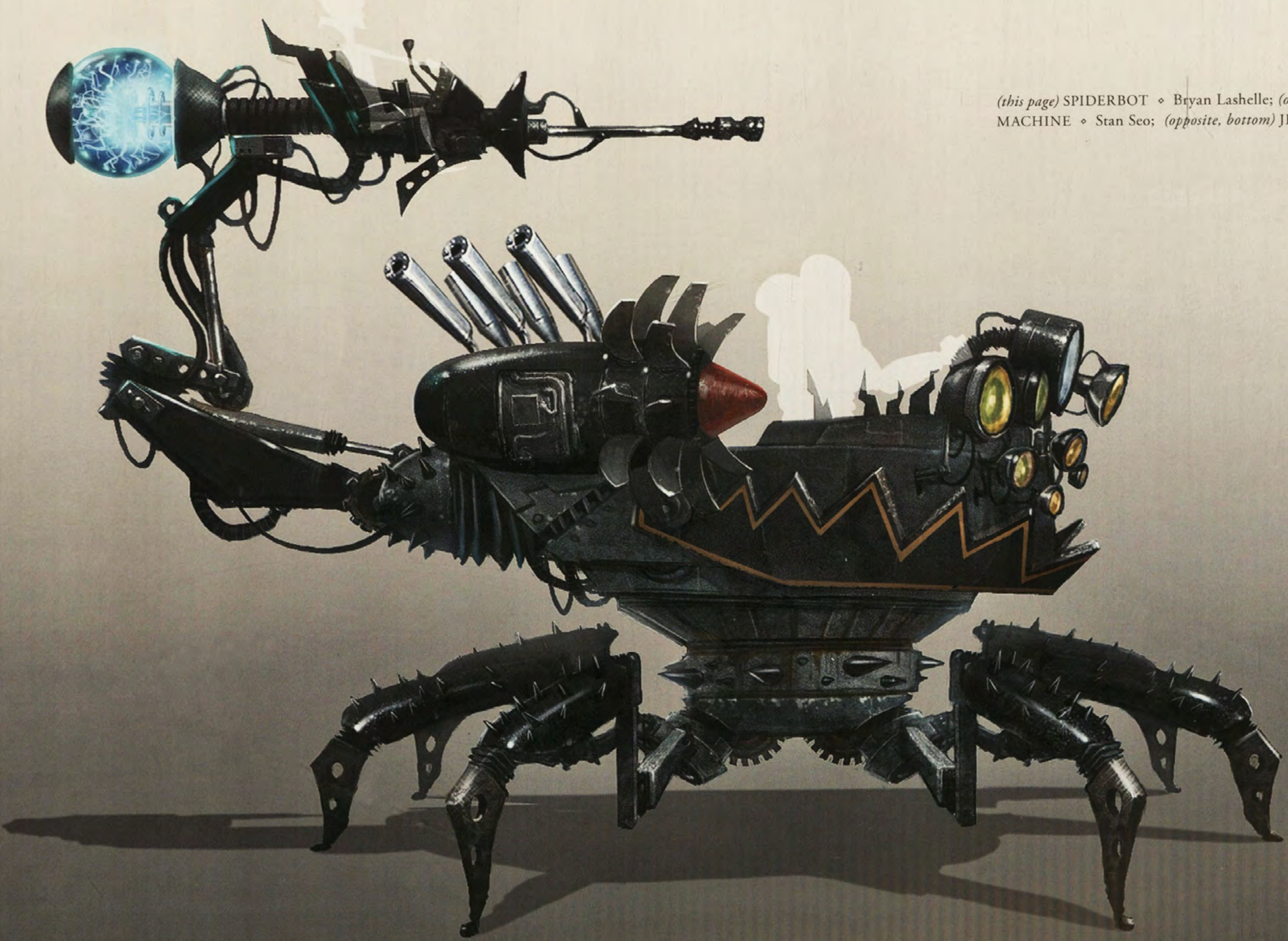
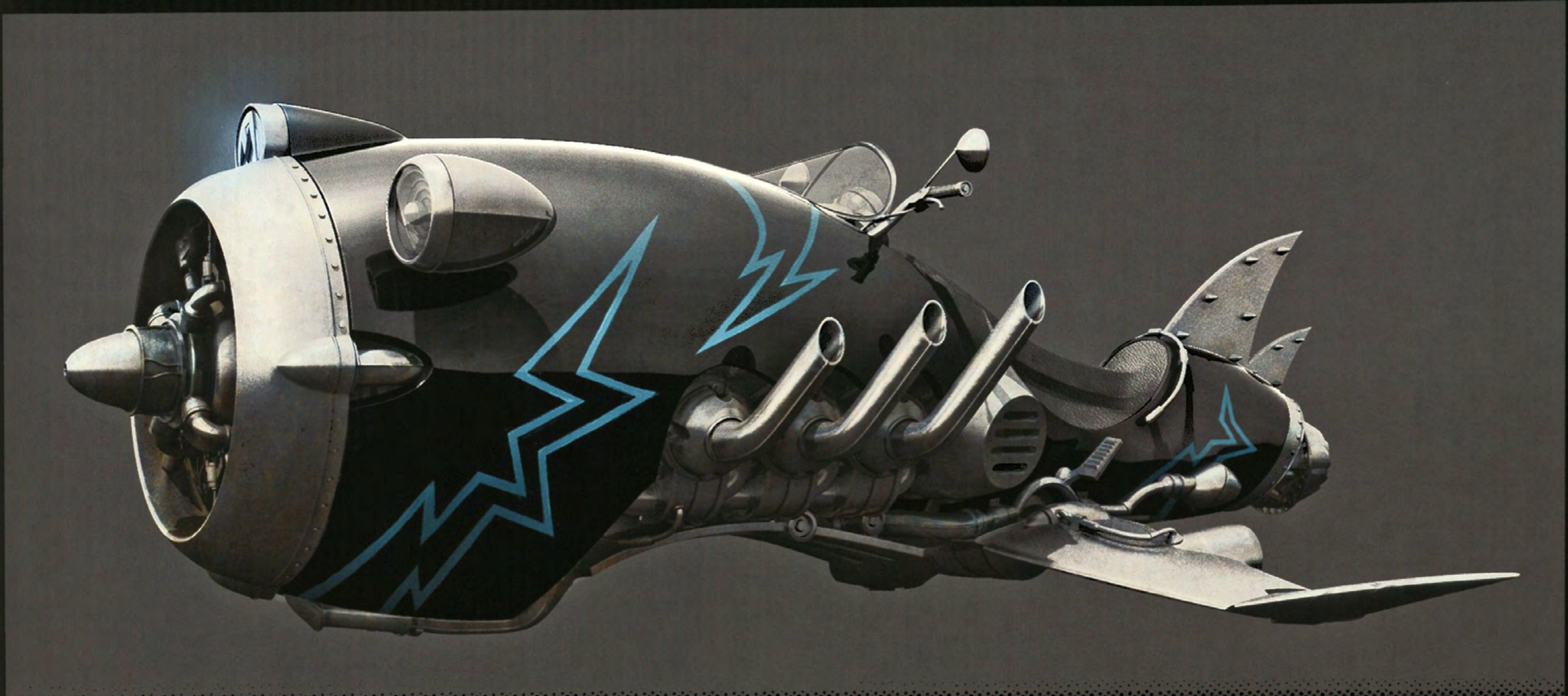
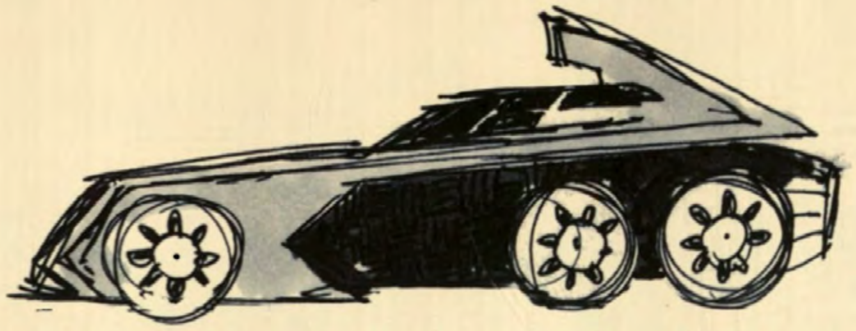
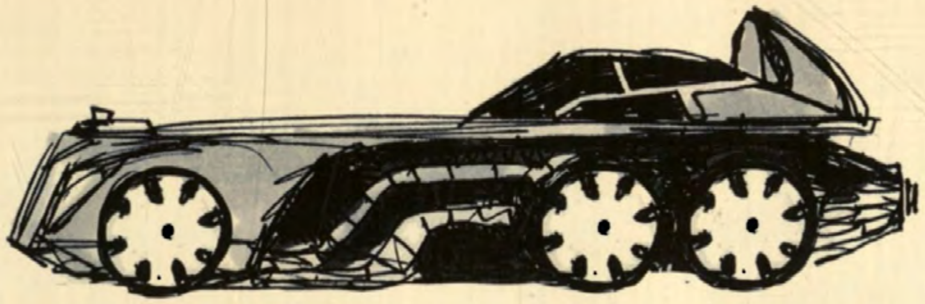
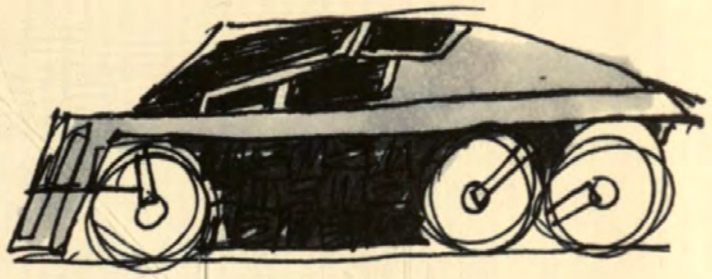


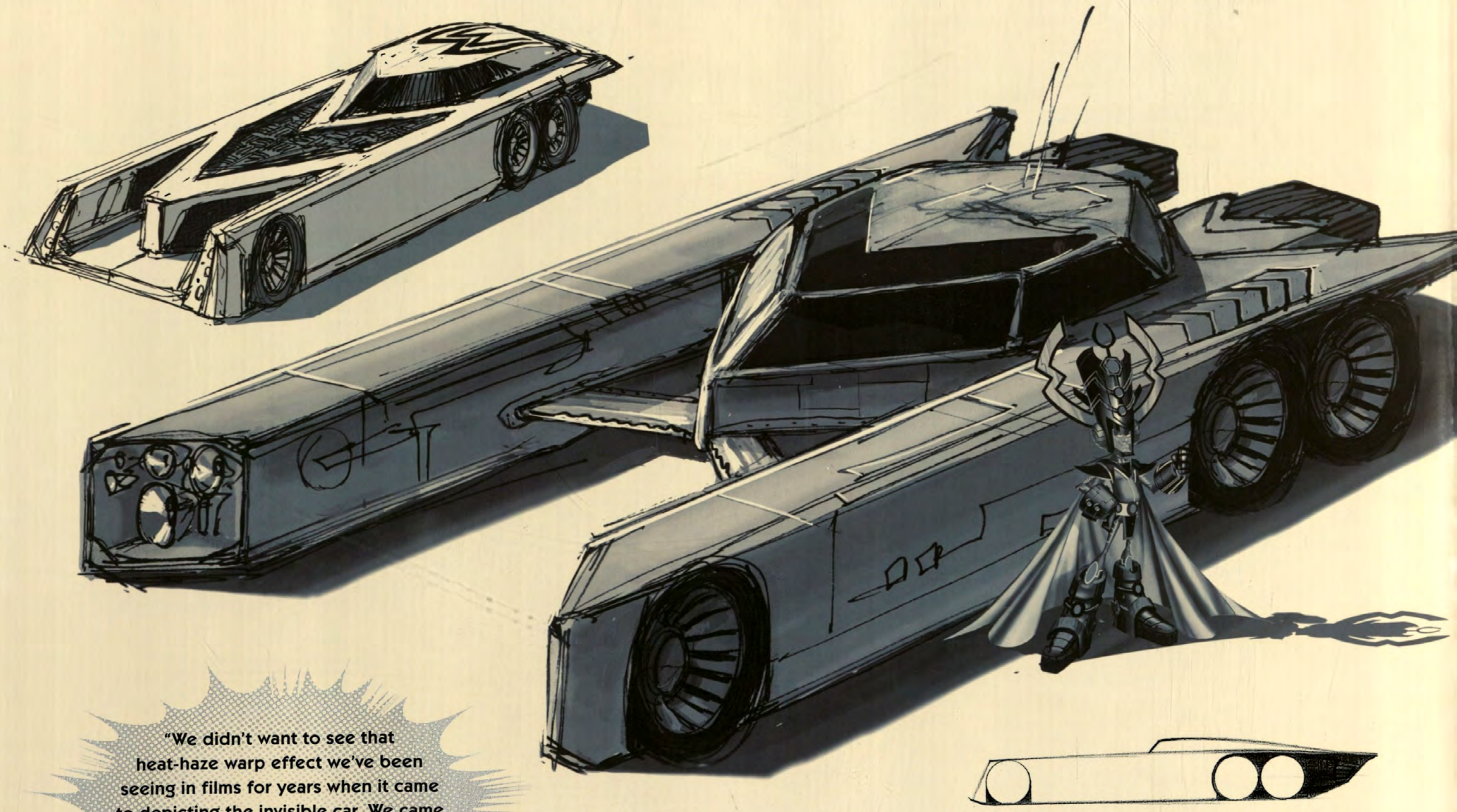
(this page) SPIDERBOT ⋄ Bryan Lashelle; *(opposite, top)* FLYING MACHINE ⋄ Stan Seo; *(opposite, bottom)* JETPACK ⋄ Stan Seo



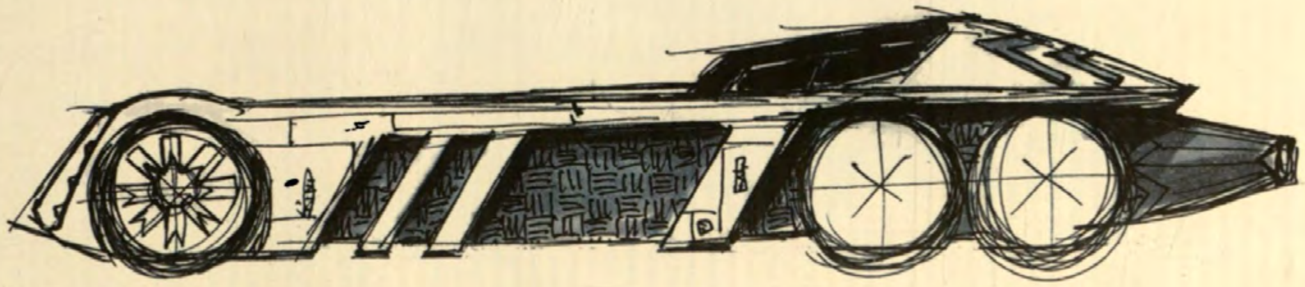


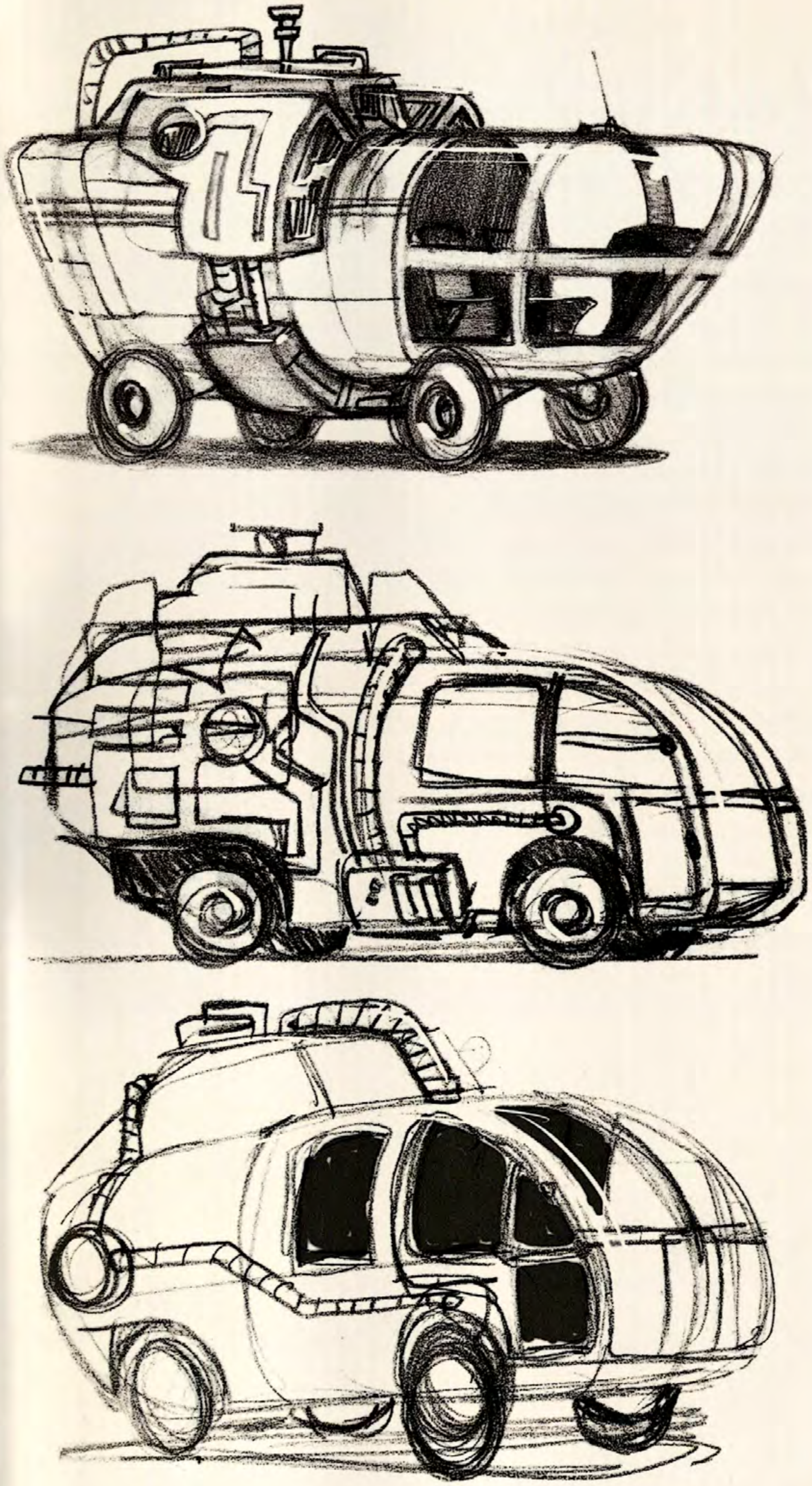




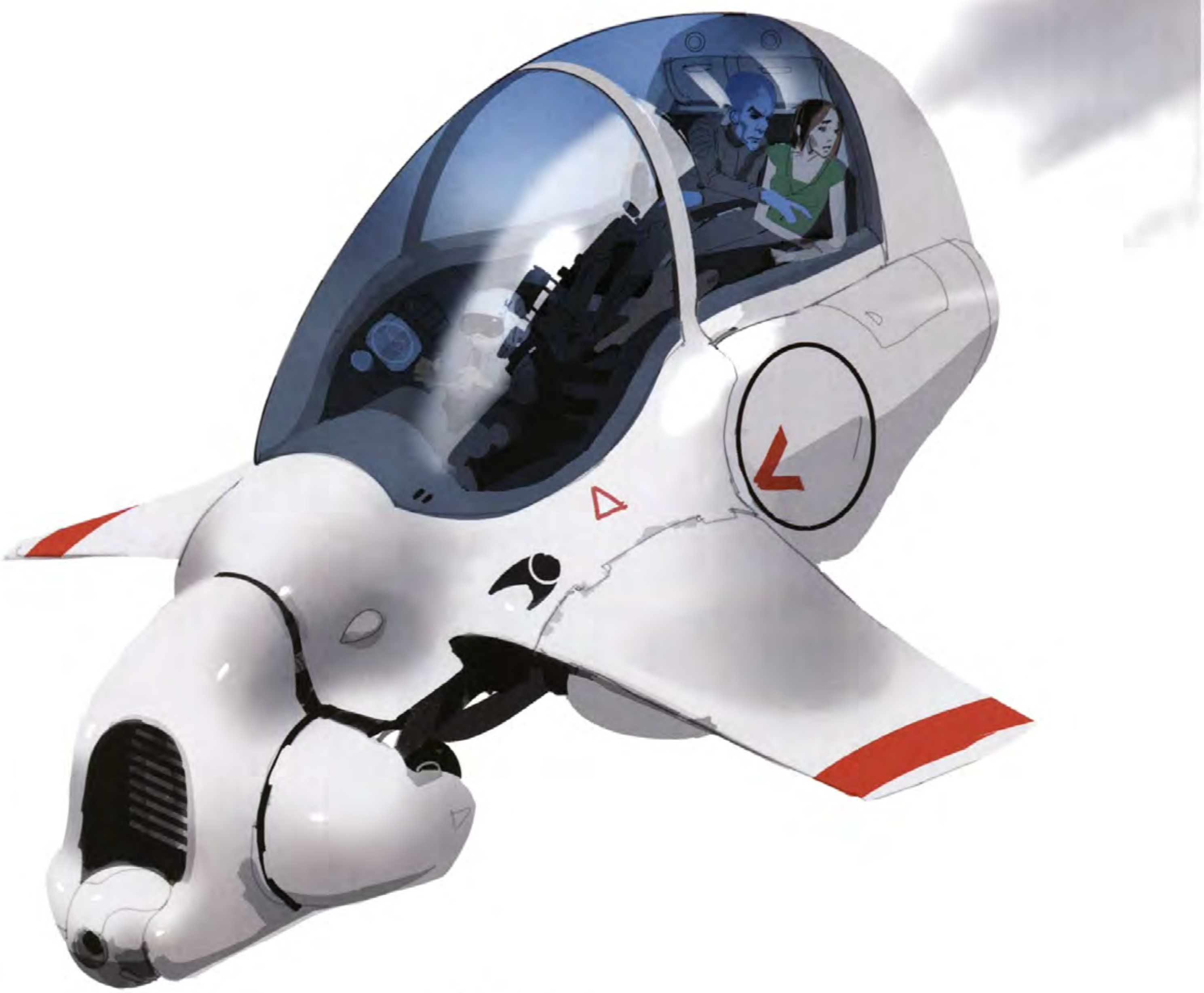


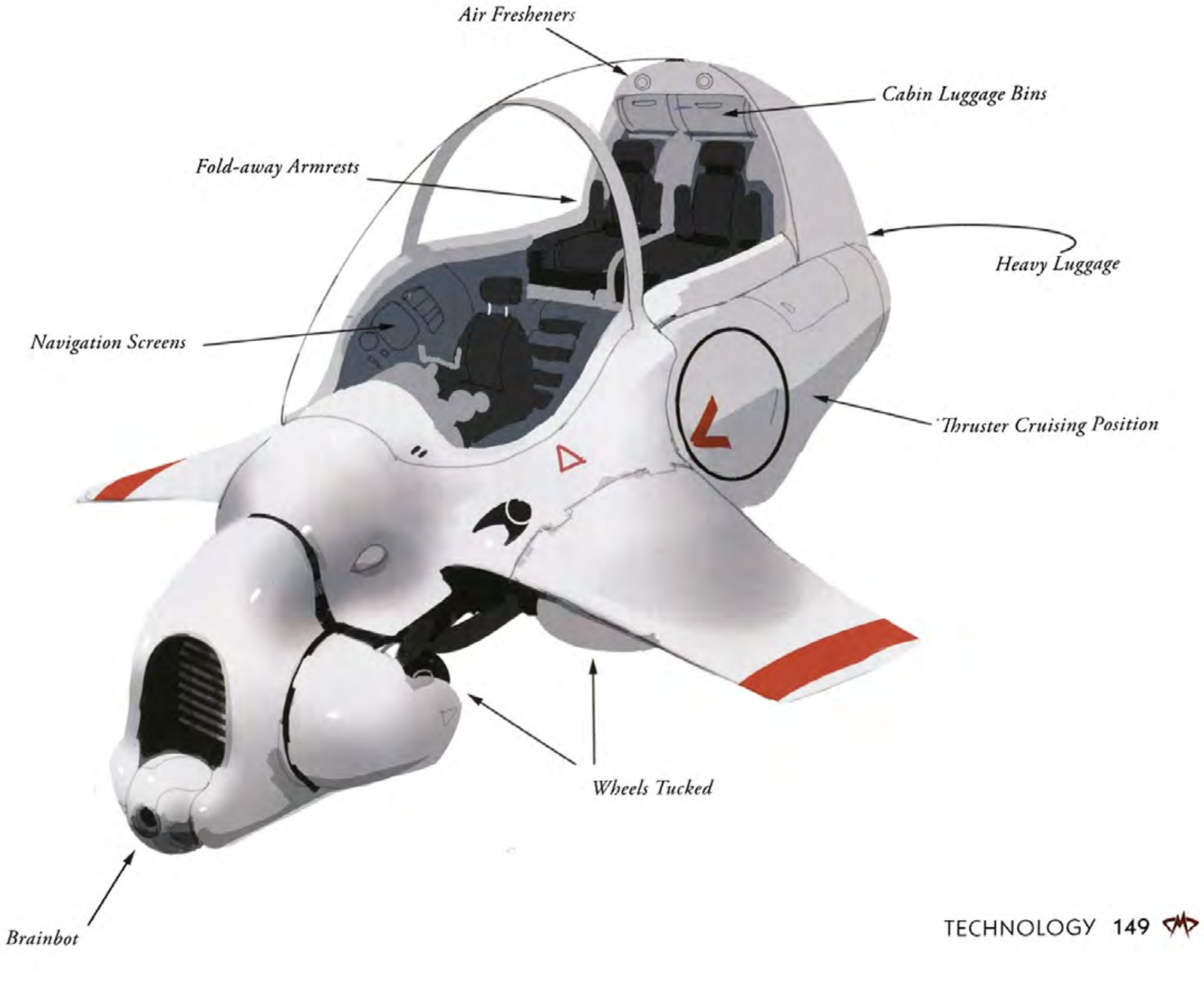
"We didn't want to see that heat-haze warp effect we've been seeing in films for years when it came to depicting the invisible car. We came up with something that, when the car moves, smears whatever is behind it."
—DAVID LIPTON, HEAD OF FX





(opposite) CONCEPT VEHICLES ◦ Peter Maynez; *(above)* VEHICLES ◦ Peter Maynez; *(right)* FLYING MACHINE ◦ Dermot Power




Air Fresheners
Cabin Luggage Bins
Fold-away Armrests
Heavy Luggage
Navigation Screens
Thruster Cruising Position
Wheels Tucked
Brainbot

SCENE 2150: MEGAMIND IS BACK

Scene 2150, also titled "Megamind is Back," features a splendidly clad evil Megamind right before he reaches the ultimate turning point in his character.

Director Tom McGrath explains: "It's the point in the movie where Megamind reconnects with his relationship with evil, after the disguise generator fails, and Roxanne rejects him. He decides to do what he's best at, and that's being evil."

Head of story Catherine Rader expands: "Spurned by Roxanne and his ever-loyal friend Minion, Megamind returns to his lair. Megamind looks to the idea wall that outlines his master plan, from which he's wavered. With steely resolve, we see him don the Black Mamba, the most evil suit yet. The Brainbots dress him, tug on his platform boots, buff his giant bald head, apply menacing eyeliner, and, as the camera pulls back, we see his fractured face reflected in a shattered mirror."

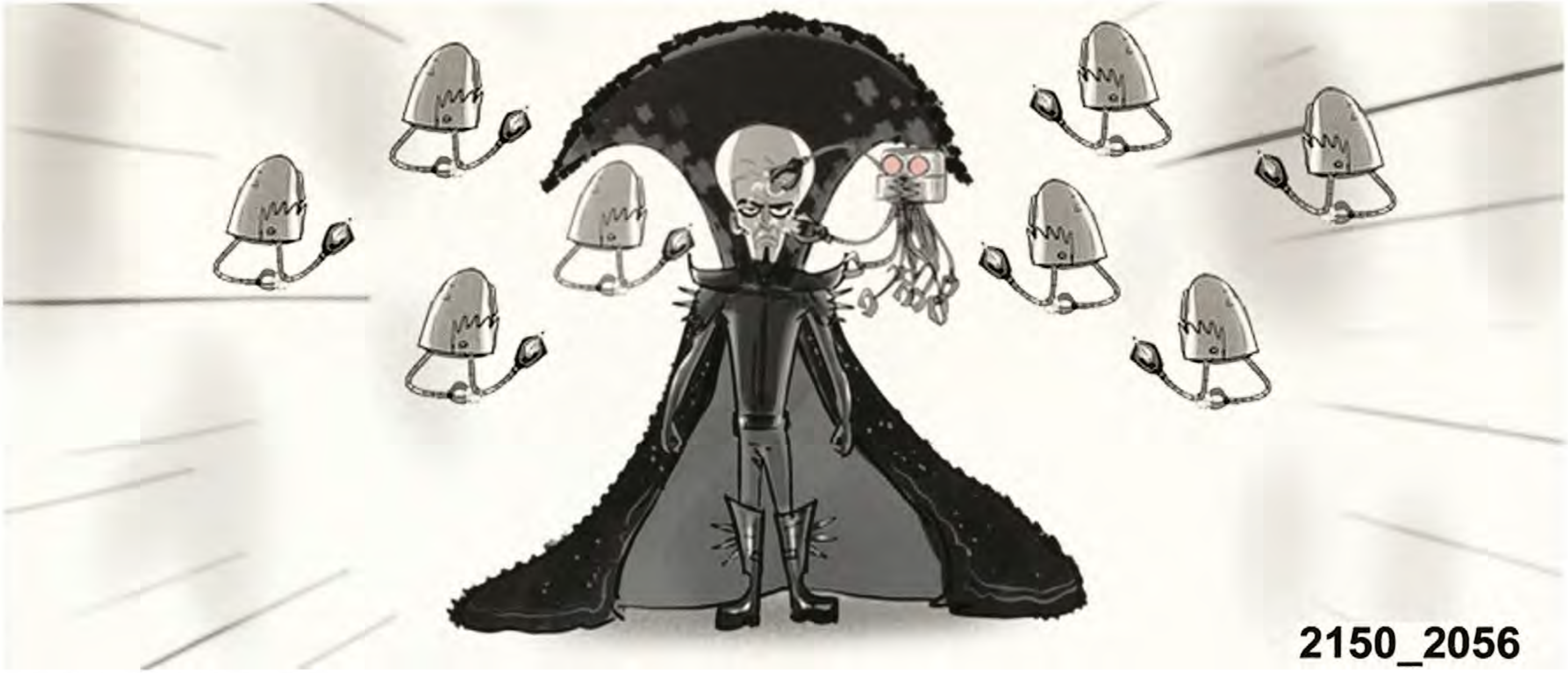
Art director Tim Lamb concludes: "It's a strong scene with dark overtones—Megamind gets into his big robot battle suit and gets to be an archnemesis again."

This crucial sequence began in storyboards, the DNA of the film and "the freest part of the filmmaking process," according to Rader. Brought together on an Avid video editing system, the storyboards were sequenced into an extremely basic version of the film to come. "After the editor and director look it over, story artists begin treating the way the film will flow," Rader explains. "There are artists that can really milk the drama, tension, and subtle acting, allowing the audience to empathize with the characters' feelings."

"Pre-vis" (previsualization) is the next step, although it comes into play throughout the filmmaking process as scenes are reworked. Director of pre-vis Kent Seki helped lay out this computer-generated forecast of what the action would look like, with plenty of options for camera angles. "We try to use the storyboards as a starting point, because they've been signed off by the director," Seki notes. "We take it one step further: we actually try to shoot the boards as coverage, not as individual shots.

"We then send a rough cut down to the editor," Seki continues. "The editor effectively edits a sequence twice. He first cuts the story reel. He then takes a fresh look at it when he gets the animated previz coverage, at which point he can decide if he wants to recut it."

As an animated film, *Megamind* uses pre-vis from beginning to end, not just to engineer complicated action sequences, but also to heighten its emotional resonance. Tom McGrath remarks, "In a live-action superhero movie, you go to an effects sequence that goes to computer graphics. But everything in *Megamind* is in the realm of computer graphics: you can push things a little further than you could in live action and still be right there with the characters."



(above) 2150 STORYBOARD ◦ Ennio Torresan

To understand what happens after pre-vis, the familiar production metaphor of a pipeline doesn't help much in visualizing the process. "Water doesn't just flow through, so to speak," says city development supervisor Jonathan Gibbs. "It judders. And certain departments don't even fit in the pipeline. In animation, sometimes you see something later on that makes you want to change something you did previously."

Head of character animation Jason Schleifer begins to outline the process with greater specificity: drawings are first turned into computer-generated models, which are then outfitted with character rigs, to become 3D models that can be moved digitally. The models are just the beginning, though, as they are put into the scene and their looks are refined.

Visual effects supervisor Philippe Denis's specialty is troubleshooting the lighting and surfacing of the characters, which are what give them their sense of dimensionality and surface in final animation. It is, he notes, a matter of "checking the texture and the material quality of everything—getting the skin right, the eyes, the clothing responding to the light as it should. It's a very important part of the process. If we don't do the texture right, there's no way to do the lighting, because the light won't respond properly to the texture."

Once the lighting and surfacing are complete, effects, or FX, are added to the scene by head of FX David Lipton. FX comprises all the details that bring a scene to life that aren't covered by other departments. In the case of Scene 2150, a signature effect is when both Megamind's robot and his Black Mamba glove crackle with electricity.

Lastly, opportunities for 3D are considered, although the entire animation process is geared toward the anticipation of 3D final effects. "This is a very exciting time in 3D," says Seki. "We're starting to improve how 3D can be done. In animation, because you can control the stereo image so well, you can cut together wide shots with close-ups without too much eyestrain, and you can tweak the compositions to optimize both the cut and the stereo as you develop the movie. That's why animation is the optimal format for 3D."

"If you were to have shown an audience *The Bourne Ultimatum* twenty years ago, people would have lost their minds, because the editing is so fast and it breaks a lot of traditional rules, like crossing the axis line," Seki adds. "But you can understand it today, because audiences are more sophisticated and used to that kind of cutting style. 3D is the same way. There'll be a film ten years from now that you couldn't show people of today, because they wouldn't know where to look."

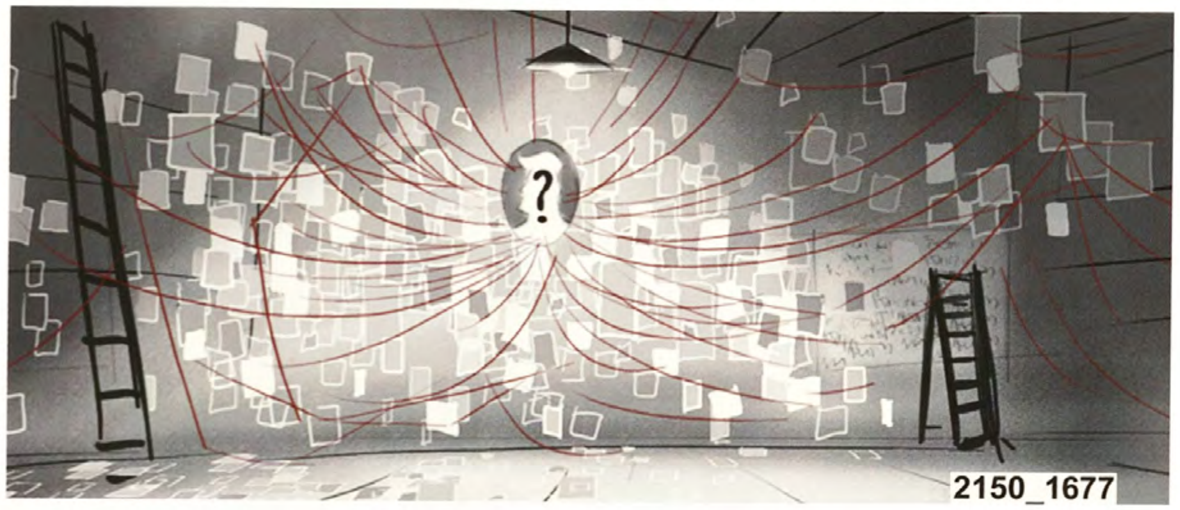
3D will add to the excitement of sky-high adventuring, as when Megamind chases Tighten through Metro City at night, as well as the grandeur of moments like Scene 2150's unveiling of Megamind. In all cases, the DreamWorks Animation team seeks to use the new technology to create films with both visual and psychological depth.

(above) CG RENDER ◦ DreamWorks Animation

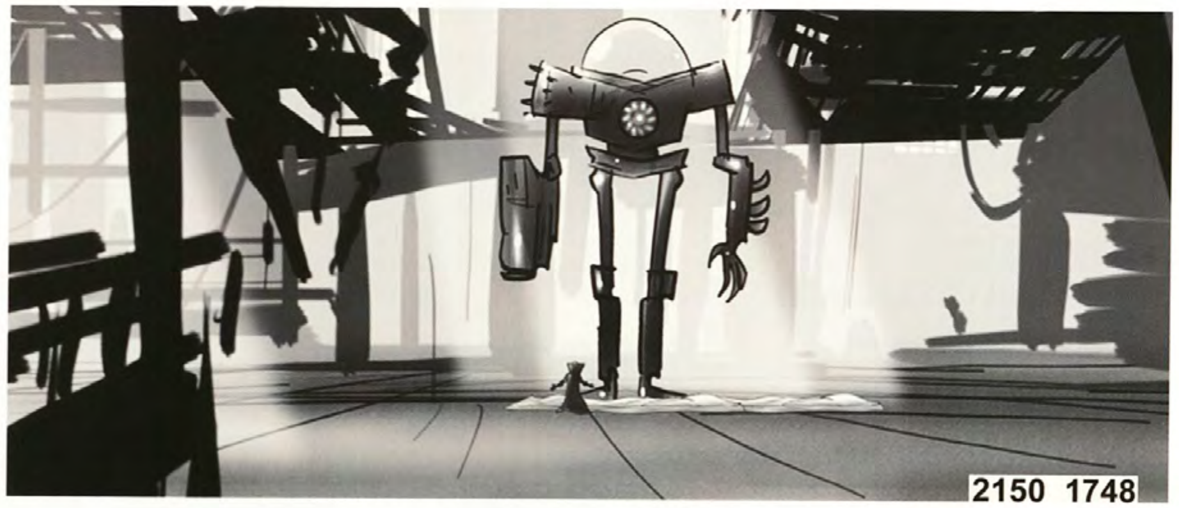
STORYBOARDS

The sequence is mapped out with rough sketches that forecast action and camera angles.

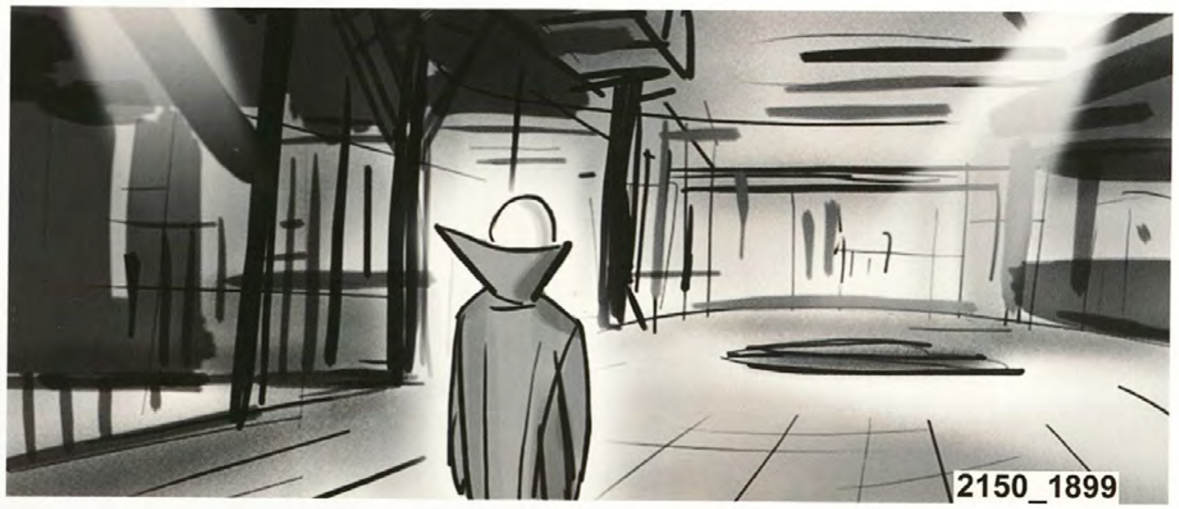
FRAME 1677



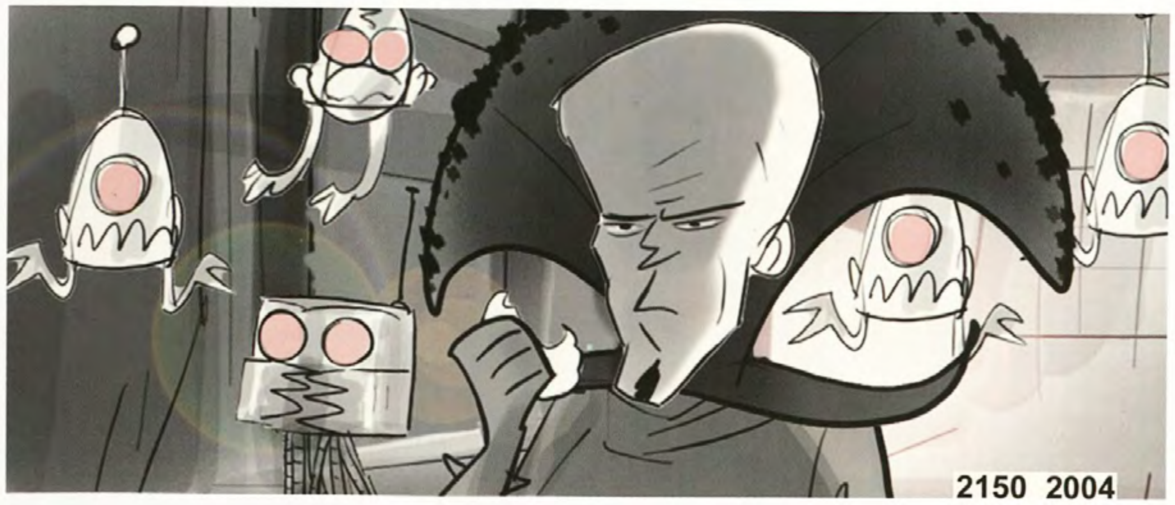
FRAME 1748



FRAME 1899

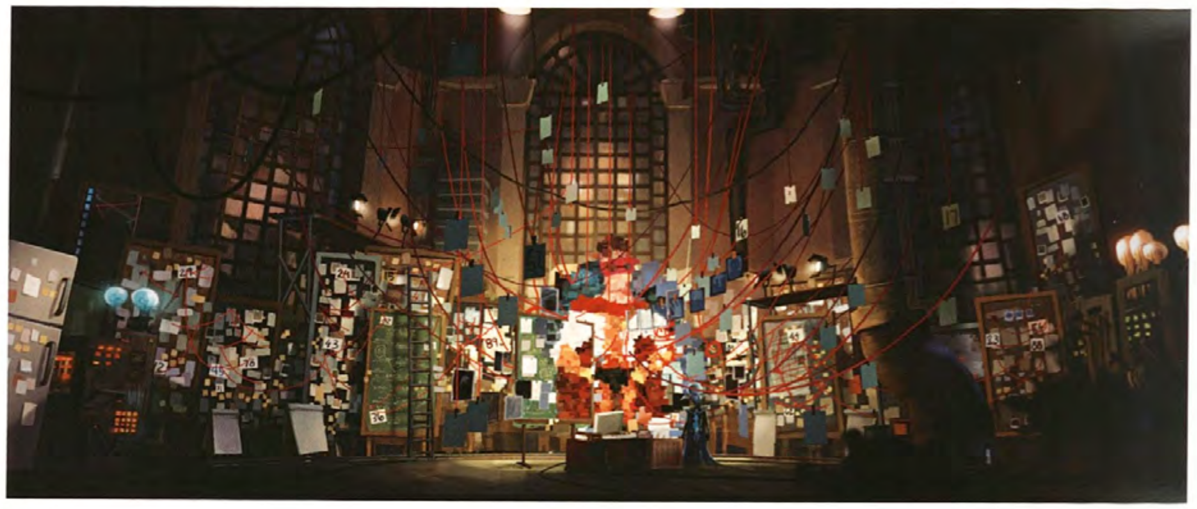


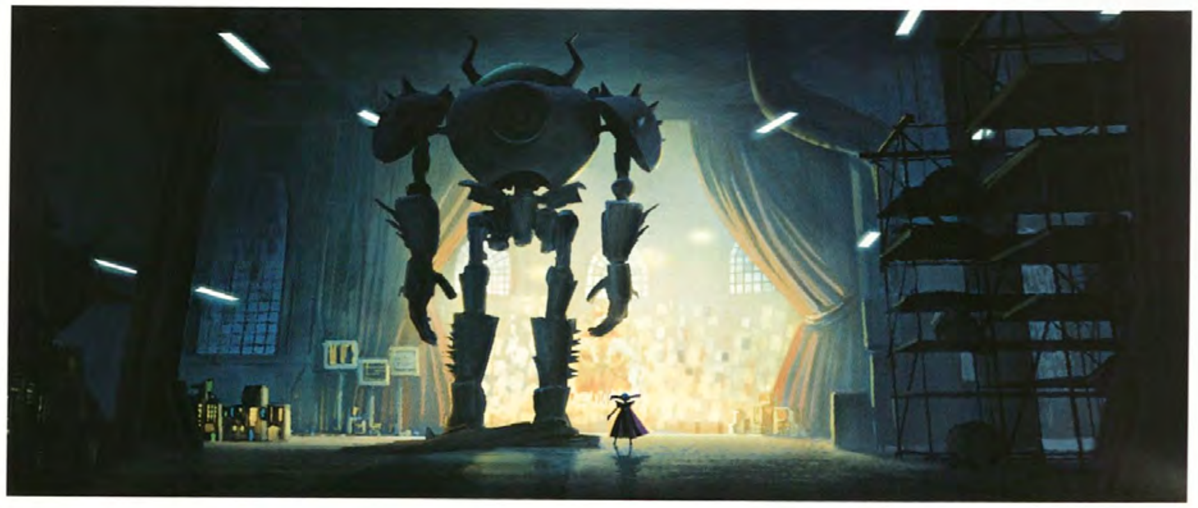
FRAME 2004

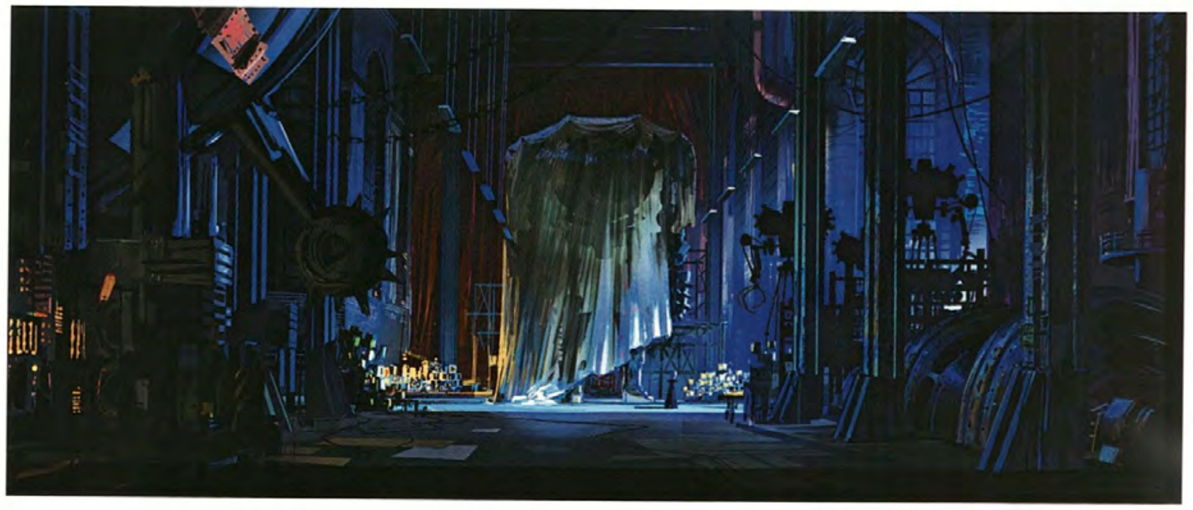


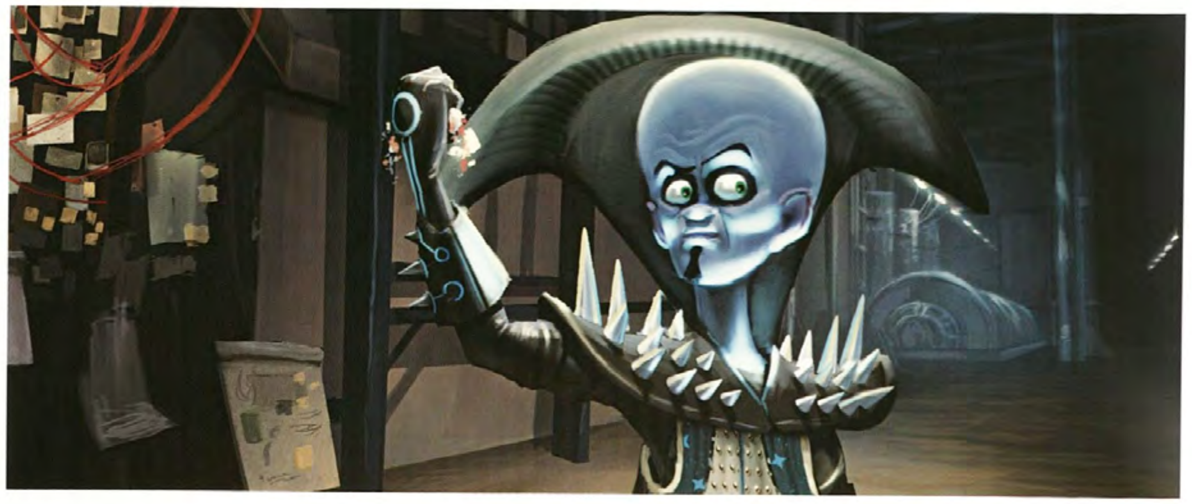
COLOR KEYS

Color tones are assigned to inform the lighting of the shot.



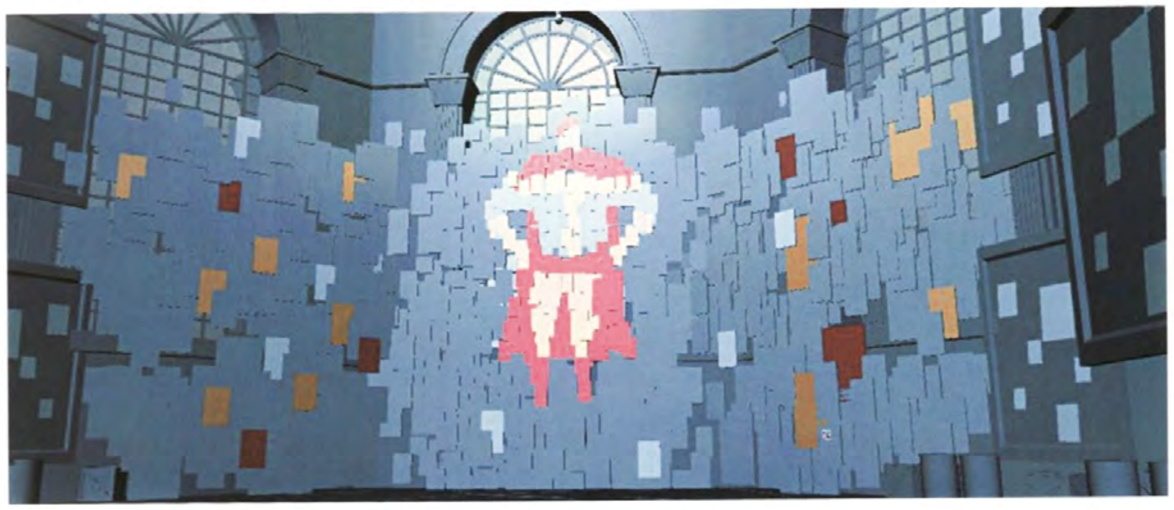


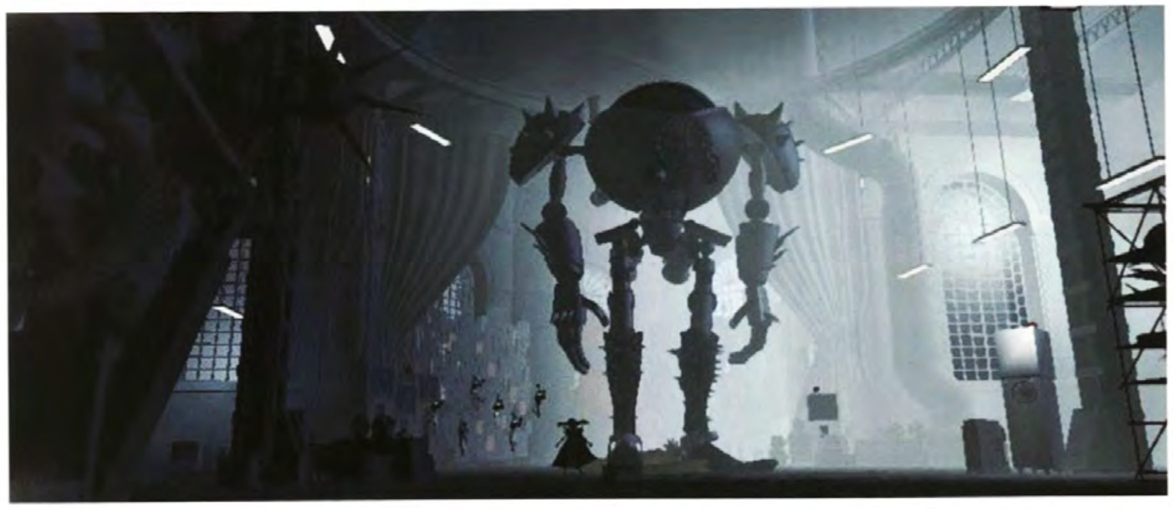


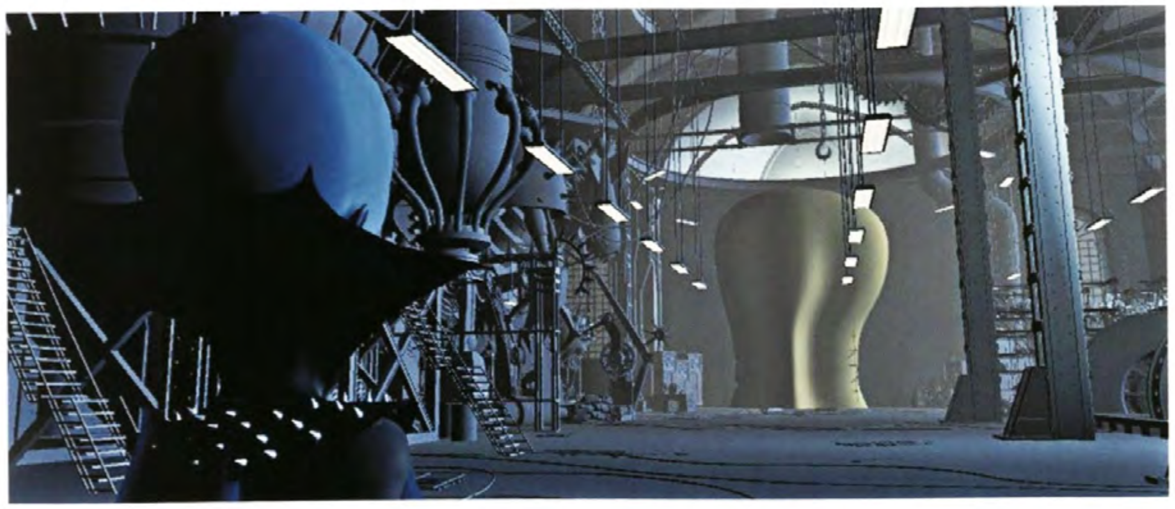


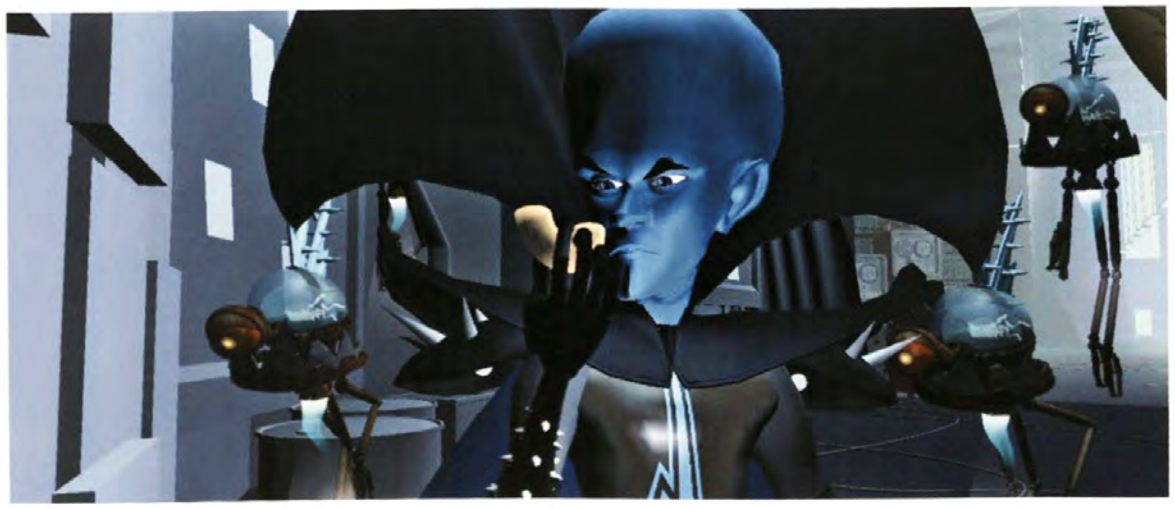
LAYOUT

Rough animation models are placed in a three-dimensional CG space.



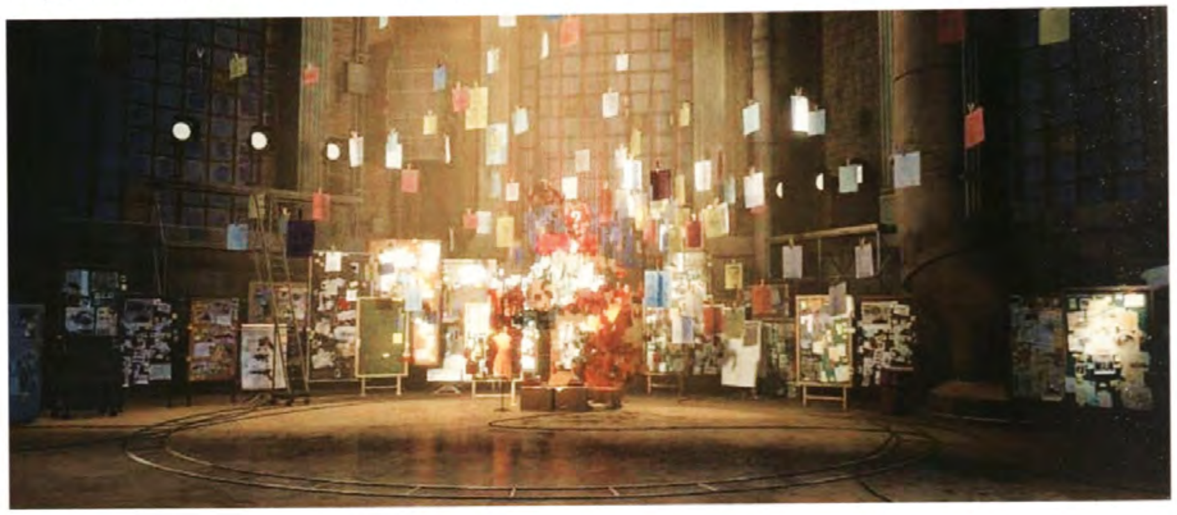


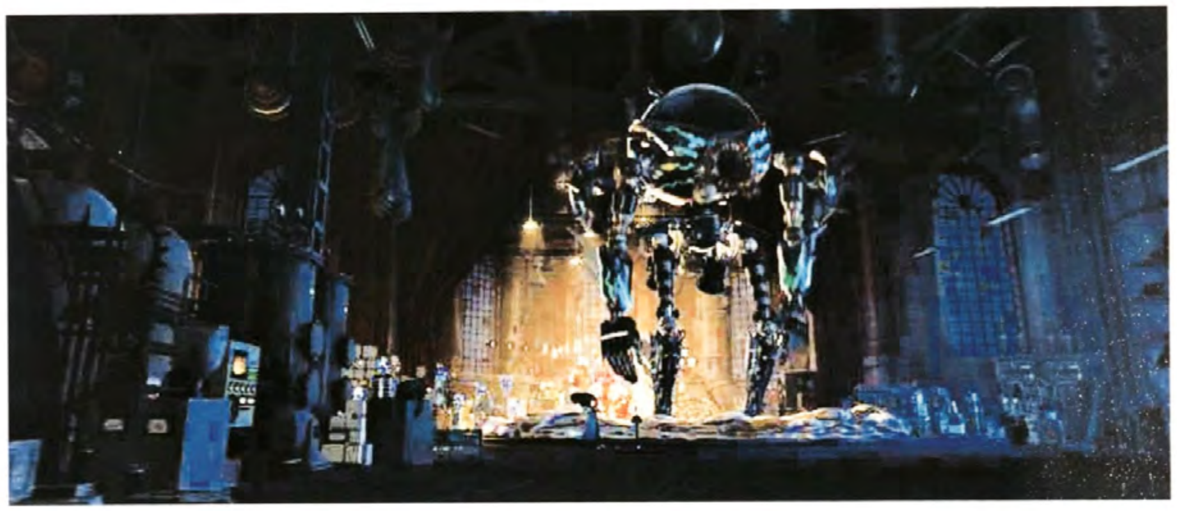


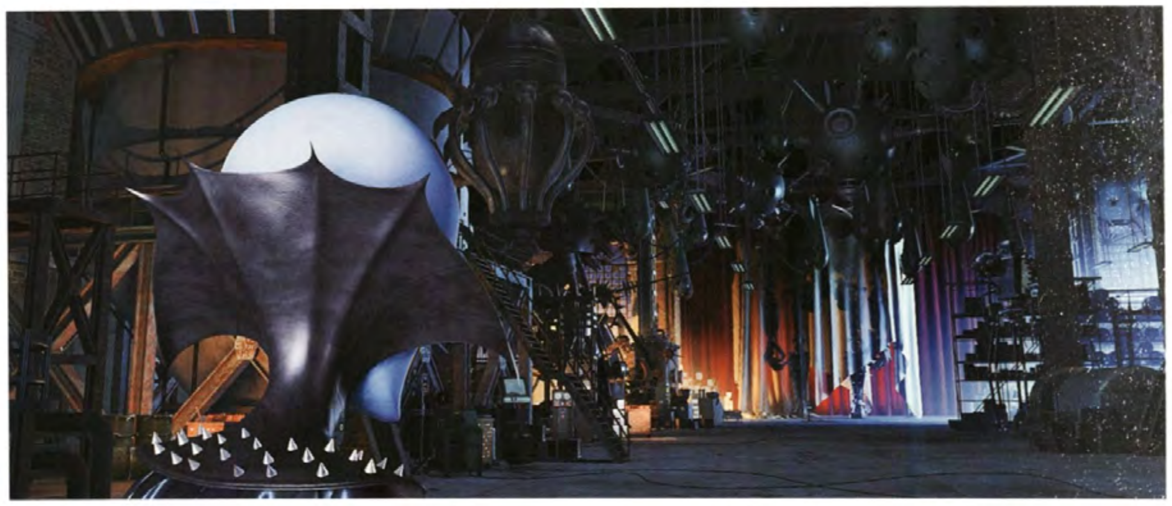


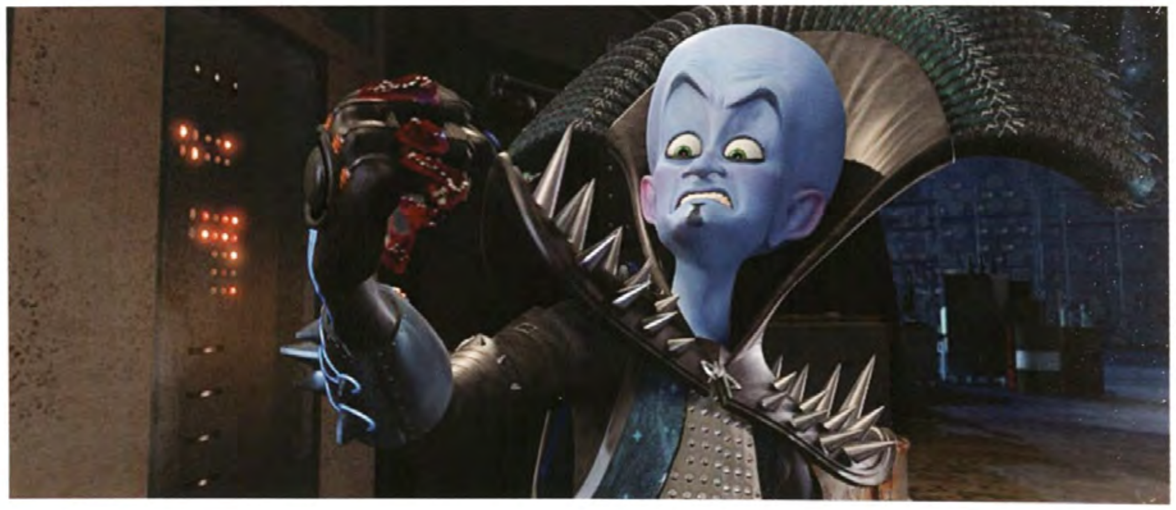
FINAL FRAMES

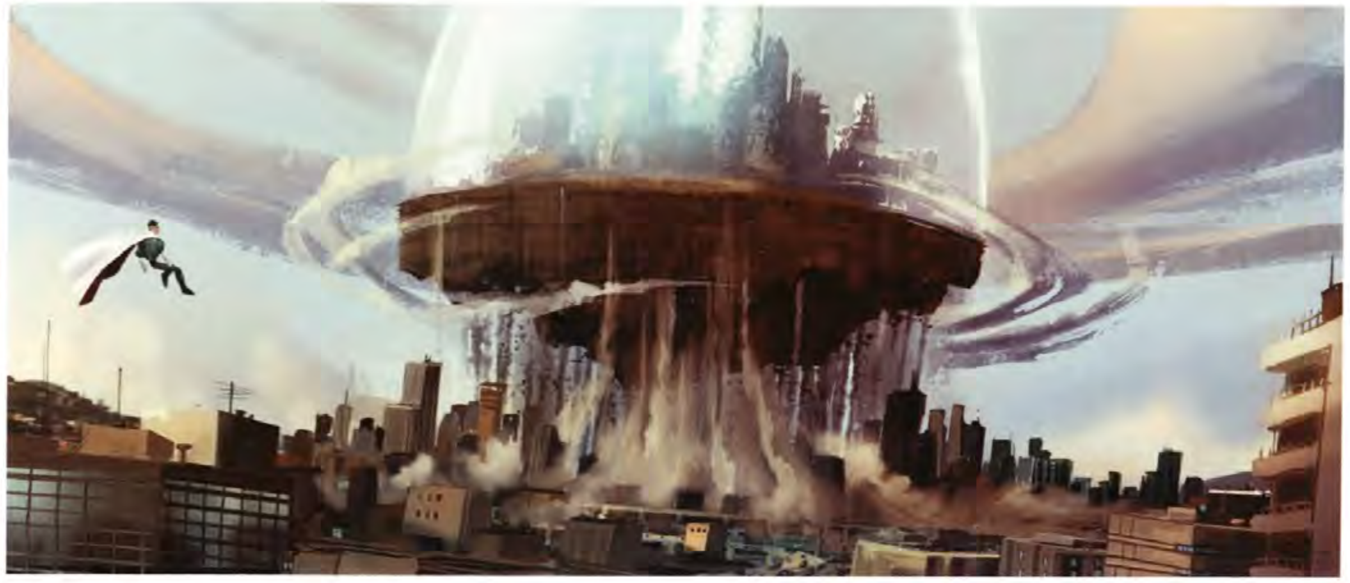
Surfaces are textured, FX and lighting are integrated, and a final render is made.

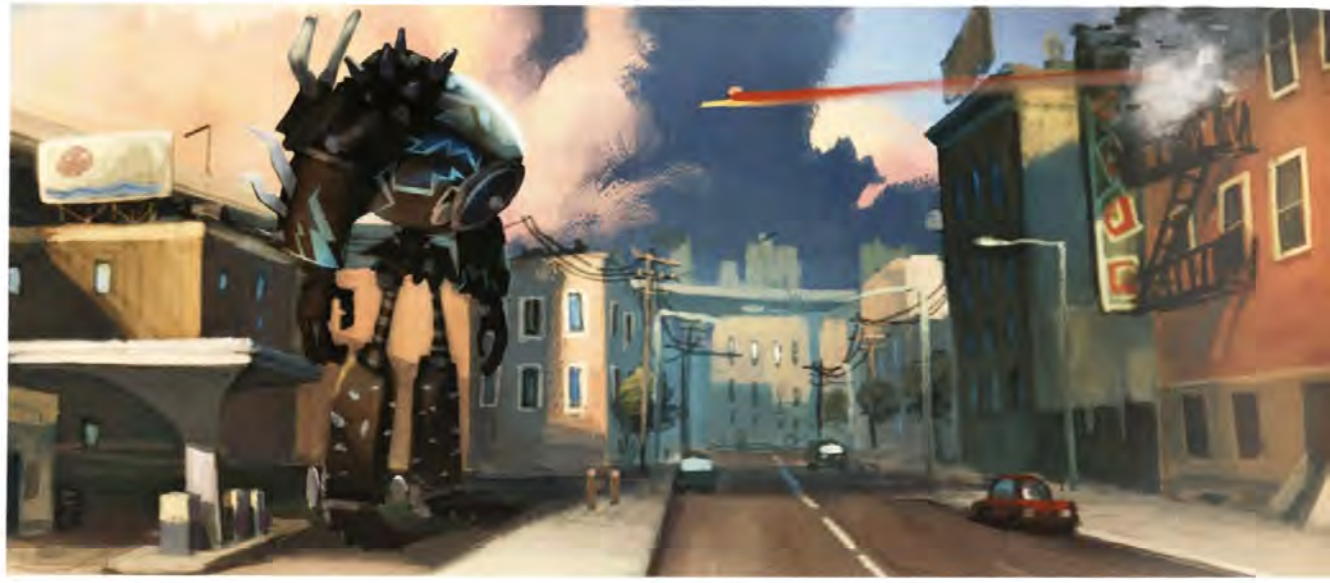












CONCLUSION

Megamind is DreamWorks Animation's timely intervention in the superhero genre. The production itself is worthy of a comic book chronicle, with an epic origin story, and a crop of talented and imaginative artists working on it.

It's fitting that animation take on the superhero, as animation is a bit of a miracle in its own right. The word derives from *anima*, Latin for "soul," and translates roughly as "giving life." Even more so than depicting storms, cataclysms, or the clashes of superpowered heroes and villains in the skies, animation is about embodying the illusion of life, in all its details of expression and emotion. *Megamind* manages to do both—it is a film with plenty of big explosions that doesn't lose track of its characters, or sacrifice the comedy or the heart that its premise promises.

With these distinguishing marks, *Megamind* and this book, *The Art of Megamind*, testify to many of the advancements digitally animated film has made over the last ten years. The dedication to furthering the art of contemporary animation shared by animators, studios, and filmmakers in general—and DreamWorks Animation in particular—promises to bring that art even further in the decades to come. *Megamind* paves the way in many respects, most notably the 3D stereoscopic viewing experience.

DreamWorks Animation's Bay-side offices in Redwood City, California, provide a fascinating glimpse at the monumental efforts necessary to produce an animated film. It's a staggering view of the thousands of pieces of character, location, and general development art required to visualize a world and bring it to life. When you step back and think about what a vast undertaking a computer-generated animated feature film must be, it truly is a task worthy of a supergenius.

(previous pages, first row) 2150 STORYBOARDS ◦ Ennio Torresan; *(previous pages, second row, top to bottom)* IDEA WALL ◦ Alex Puvilland; GIANT ROBOT UNVEILED ◦ Alex Puvilland; MEGAMIND RETURNS TO LAIR ◦ Alex Puvilland; DONUT CRUSH ◦ Travis Koller; *(top left)* OPENING BATTLE ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(top right)* TIGHTEN FLIES TO MEGAMIND ◦ Kory Heinzen; *(left)* CG RENDER ◦ DreamWorks Animation; *(above)* CG RENDER ◦ DreamWorks Animation

CREW

(right) DREAMWORKS ANIMATION CREW ⋄ Glendale, California
(below) PDI/DREAMWORKS CREW ⋄ Redwood City, California

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In addition to all the people thanked below, Insight Editions would like to thank Mark Nichol, Jody Revenson, Dasha Trojanek, Lucy Kee, Martina D'Alessandro, and Binh Matthews.

DreamWorks Animation would like to acknowledge the invaluable participation of Carolyn Frost, Rhion Magee, Cori Hansen, Jeff Hare, Tiffany Navarro, Ashley Kravitz, Alison Lima, Robert Ogden, and Whitney DiCarlo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

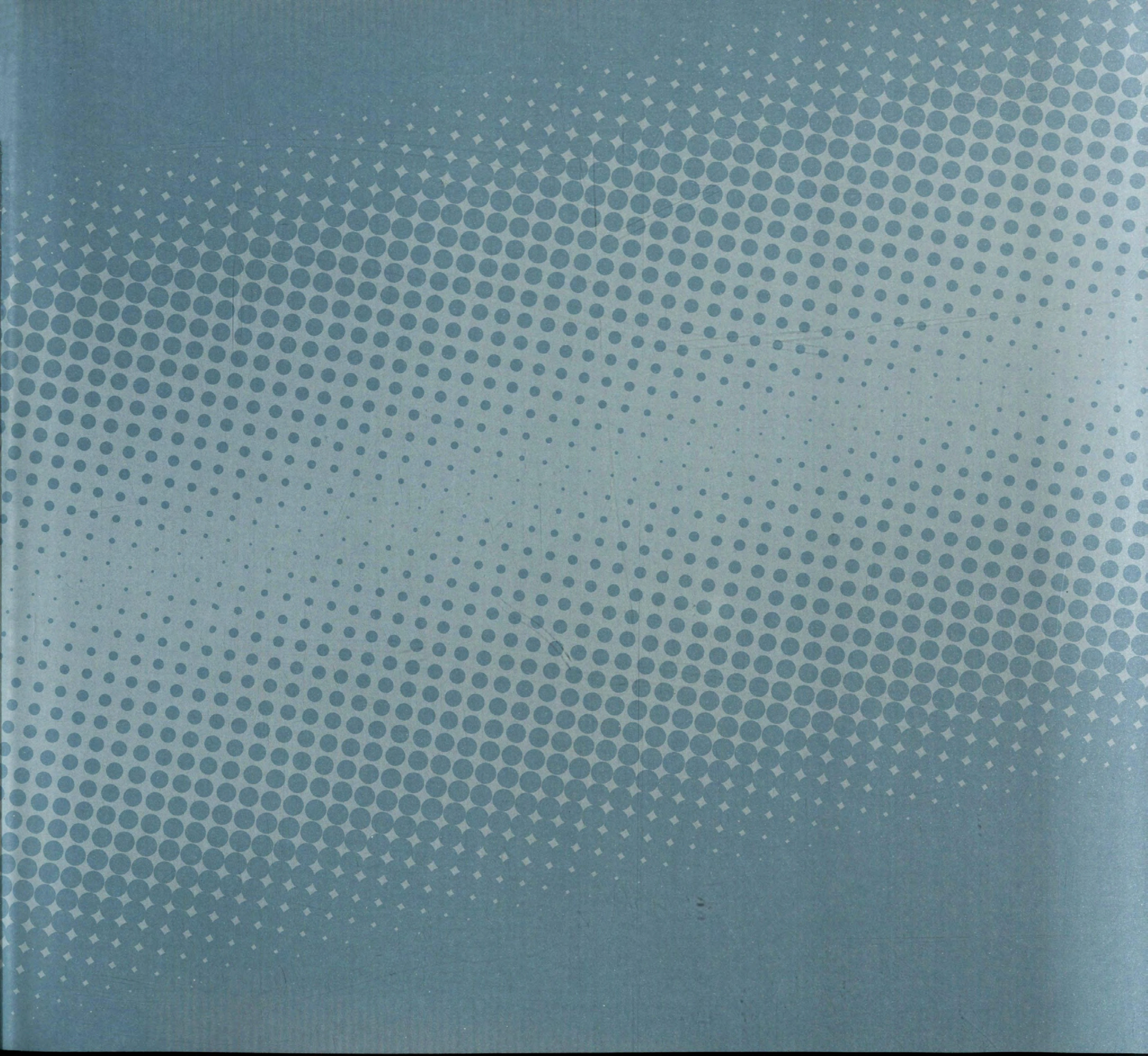
The DreamWorks Animation team that dropped what they were doing to talk with me demonstrated nothing but grace under pressure. Producer Denise Cascino understood the romance of superhero lore that tends to get mislaid under layers of solipsistic fandom. Cascino also made time to show me what pre-vis was, and Kent Seki finished the job. That was lucky, because Seki is not just a pioneer of this technology but also a particularly articulate advocate of what it can do. Director Tom McGrath's confidence under deadlines is admired by all, including me. Lara Breay's tenacity kept *Megamind* alive over the years. The affable David James, obviously a fellow 007 fan, dropped the name I most wanted to hear: that of Sir Ken Adam, production designer for the James Bond films of the 1960s and 1970s. The talented Tim Lamb made time, the French wizard Philippe Denis explained the importance of light in digital animation, and Catherine Rader went above and beyond describing her own role as head of story, and her affection for *Megamind* and its characters was infectious. David Lipton tipped me off to the scientists working on invisibility. Both Jonathan Gibbs and Jason Schleifer gave lots of help.

Thanks to Kristy Cox at DreamWorks Animation, Jake Gerli and the talents at Insight Editions, Dan Pulcrano and Michael Gant at Metro Newspapers, and thanks to Sura Wood for her encouragement. Every conversation with Michael Monahan is an education, even if it's on the subject of our endless mutual enthusiasm for things that are sometimes dumb.

Thanks to Jeanne Rehrig. Being a fine artist, she brings her visual skills to the task of helping a husband see things from a different angle and a new perspective.

—Richard von Busack

(left) ROBOTS FIREWORKS ◦ Erwin Madrid;
(above) CG RENDER ◦ DreamWorks Animation



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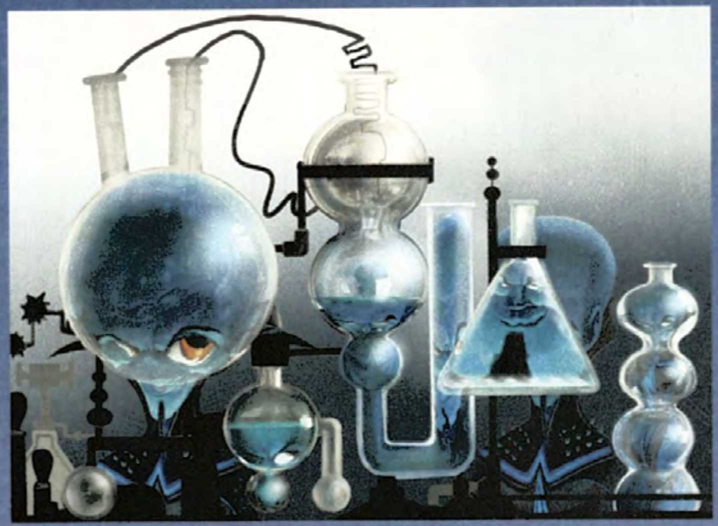

RICHARD VON BUSACK has been a film critic and general arts reporter for the independent San Jose-based Metro Newspapers chain for over twenty-five years. Covering everything from Shakespeare to comic books, his writing has also appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Entertainment Weekly*. He co-hosts *CinemaScene*, a television program and podcast, and lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

LOOK FOR THESE OTHER DreamWorks Animation / Insight Editions books: *Shrek: The Art of the Quest*, *The Art of Kung Fu Panda*, *The Art of Madagascar 2*, and *The Art of Shrek Forever After*.

DreamWorks' *Megamind: Bad. Brilliant. Blue.*™ & © 2010
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Back cover art: Alex Puvilland
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3160 Kerner Blvd., Unit 108
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The Art of
DreamWorks MEGAMIND

BAD. BRILLIANT. BLUE.

IN ITS OWN INTERPRETATION of the superhero comic book genre, *Megamind* takes the familiar characters found on the paneled page—the brainy villain with an oversized head, the independent female reporter who never lacks a snappy comeback, the hero with great hair and a V-shaped torso—and puts them in a radically new configuration in which the villain turns out to be a good guy.

On screen, Megamind's journey is one of moral maturation, but just as inspiring is the film's visual evolution during the development process. Inside *The Art of Megamind* you'll find how the talented crew at DreamWorks Animation combined Silver Age comics with heavy metal aesthetics, dramatic spaces like those found in high-concept spy films with visions of blighted urban outskirts, and real-world technology with classic car designs to create one of the most inventive movie experiences this side of Metro City.

Cover art: Ruben Perez
Top: Bryan Lashelle
Above: Goro Fujita

Film & Television / Popular Culture

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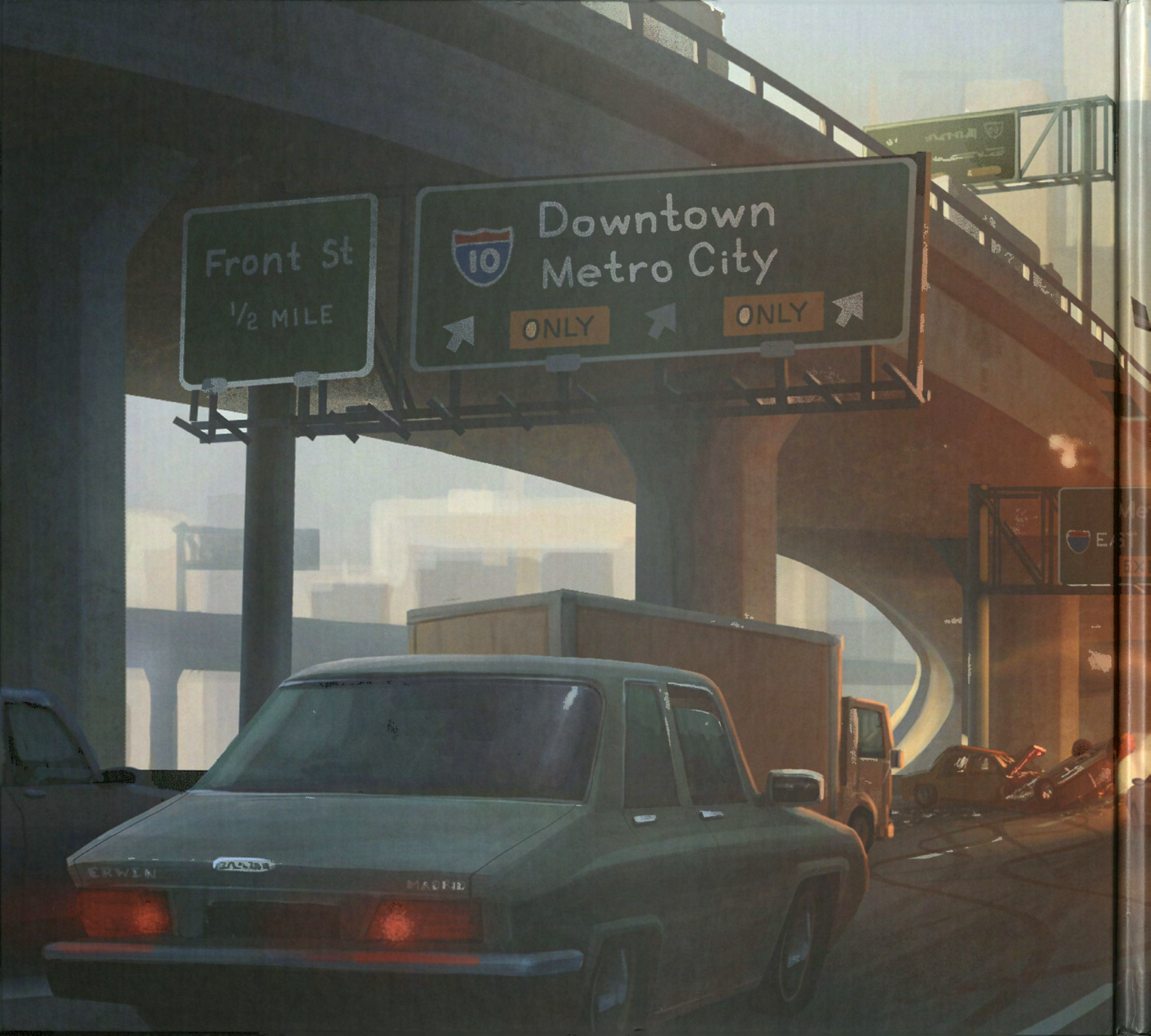
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